

*The
Tanager's
Mission*

BROWN

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Tanager's Mission*



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2 short stories, the second (abp. 131)
treats American homesteaders in
Canadian Prairies

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By STACY ALVAN BROWN

The Tanager's Mission

IN MEMORY OF MY MOTHER
MARIA H. BROWN
THIS BOOK IS WRITTEN

The Tanager's Mission

OR

In Love With His Superior

By

STACY ALVAN BROWN

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	5
Chapter I.—The Two Children.....	7
Chapter II.—The Indians.....	12
Chapter III.—In Pursuit.....	21
Chapter IV.—Fire, Water, and Tornado.....	38
Chapter V.—Found.....	49
Chapter VI.—Mutual	56
Chapter VII.—The Crisis.....	60
Chapter VIII.—Parted	64
Chapter IX.—Rose Cowden... ..	71
Chapter X.—The Present and the Past.....	75
Chapter XI.—Fooled	79
Chapter XII.—A Surprise.....	85
Chapter XIII.—An Aching Heart.....	90
Chapter XIV.—The Latin Class.....	94
Chapter XV.—Saturday Afternoon Stroll....	101
Chapter XVI.—Mr. Pennock's Advice.....	106
Chapter XVII.—The Army	112
Chapter XVIII.—The Mission	121



INTRODUCTION

This story, being followed by another story in the same book, and that one with scenes laid in the North-West, it necessarily follows that certain terms used in one may not have the same meaning when used in the other, thus calling forth certain explanations; for instance: pond as used in the first story means simply a widening of a stream; while in the second story it means an isolated body of water with no outlet.

In the state of Kansas, a frame house has the same meaning as a lumber house in the North-West.

In Kansas a bluff means a very high bank bordering a stream or a valley; in the North-West, the same word is used for a grove of trees or a clump of bushes.

To those living in the bush country of the Canadian North-West, a wild gooseberry bush large enough for a man to hide under, may appear to be somewhat of an exaggeration; but in southern Kansas, these bushes do grow to an immense size.

We seldom hear a negro, nowadays, use the word "massa," or master, in addressing a white person, but this particular colored man still used the old appellation of the slave days, when speaking to a friend in whom he had great confidence, not as an acknowledgment of him as a master, but as a mark of friendship.

The fact that prohibitionists in Kansas during the '80s were willing to use liquor as a medical treatment

for rattle-snake bite, while at the same time they advocated the prohibition of the liquor traffic, may at first look inconsistent. But the prohibition law provided for the prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquor as a beverage, but reserved the right to use it as a medicine. Liquor was kept on hand at the drug stores, and any one purchasing that commodity was obliged to sign an affidavit that they intended using it for snake bite only. It is true that, after the passage of the law, there appeared to be, from the frequent calls for liquor, an unusually large increase of rattle-snakes in the country. But, in defense of the law, it may be said that the youth of the country were not so severely tempted as when there were open saloons. It is true, too, that liquor was sold secretly to some extent, but the average young man, especially the farmer's son, grew up a temperate man, so far as the use of liquor was concerned. It is not within my province here to argue the question, but simply to state the facts of the case.

There existed a great difference between the Oto and the Cherokee Indians: the former were large, stalwart fellows, lazy, and much adverse to anything pertaining to civilization; the latter were short, active, and showed a decided inclination to adopt the ways of the white man.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO CHILDREN.

The warm Kansas sun shone down from the clear sky over upland, hill, and vale. Not a cloud could be seen. From a westerly direction came a soft, zephyr-like breeze, so gentle that the sway of the sunflower was almost imperceptible. There was a slight rustling of the leaves in the tops of the tall trees down by the creek, caused by the stronger upper current in the air.

A small frame house stood alone on the prairie, and near it a half circular pile of sand and dirt, indicating a freshly dug well, back of which stood a small chicken house—the only signs of civilization for miles around, except one other house with its accompaniment of out-buildings half a mile distant, but hidden from view by the dense foliage of a grove of large oak and elm trees.

Near the solitary house on the prairie two children, a brown-eyed boy and a golden-haired girl, of about the same age, were busily engaged in breaking off the tops of a species of sunflower which they called rosin weed, intending to gather, the following day, the gum which would form at the break; this they used as chewing gum.

Henry and Mary Brandon and their little son George had moved from Illinois to southern Kansas, where Mr. Brandon purchased a quarter section of land lying near the junction of the east and west branches of a creek, and built the little frame building near which the two children were playing.

The house across the east branch of the creek back of the grove of large trees was occupied by Lewis Carlton, his son Walter and daughters Mary and Carrie. They

had come from New York several years before the Brandons had emigrated from Illinois. Mr. Carlton, having failed in the mercantile business in New York, and also lost his wife, had come to this newly settled country, where he soon became a sheep rancher. His grown daughter, Mary, looked after the household affairs, and young Walter, with the aid of an Indian pony and a good sheep dog, herded the sheep, while he attended to the farming. Little Carrie silently, but contentedly, played with her kittens and dolls until the arrival of the Brandons, when she found a very willing playmate in the person of Georgie Brandon. The two children were together nearly every day, sometimes at the Brandons', sometimes at the Carltons'. They were so accustomed to romping over the prairie and through the woods together that their frequent absence from home occasioned no alarm. Fearless became these children of pioneers; not even the coyotes frightened them. They lived among and loved the things of Nature: the flowers, the birds, and the squirrels and rabbits; nor were these birds and animals fearful of the children.

Thus were the environments suitable to the growth of a love of Nature, and the children remained pure in heart, lacking the many faults often found in children of a more settled country. Where Georgie was there was Carrie, and where Carrie was to be found there also appeared Georgie. The two seemed inseparable. Mr. and Mrs. Brandon and Mr. Carlton even talked of the possibility of the future marriage of the youngsters, and they were not careful to withhold such conversation from the hearing of the children; and the latter became endowed with the idea in a matter of fact way that they belonged to each other and would always remain so.

After the children had broken off a number of rosin weeds, Georgie attracted his playmate's attention by saying, as he pointed to a flock of wild ducks passing overhead, "Look, Carrie, at the wild ducks!"

"Oh, Georgie!" cried Carrie, as she watched the fast disappearing line of ducks, "Let's go down by the creek over at our house and watch sister's tame ducks."

"All right," assented Georgie, as the two started for the Carlton home.

"Wait a minute, Carrie, till I tell mama where we are going," said the dutiful son as he ran to the house to inform his mother of their intended departure.

"Very well, Georgie, but come back for supper," said Mrs. Brandon, without looking up from her sewing.

"Yes," replied the boy, as he ran to join his companion. They began crossing Mr. Brandon's big cornfield that lay between the Brandon house and the creek, where Pete Booker, Mr. Brandon's colored man, was cultivating corn with a team of mules.

"Where you alls gwine?" inquired Pete, a row of white teeth making a sharp contrast to the black face, as he grinned at the children.

"To see Mary Carlton's ducks," replied Georgie, taking Carrie by the arm and repeating to her in a half whisper: "Don't let's stop. Pete likes to stand and talk when he ought to be at work; I heard papa say so."

And the young couple hurried on to see the tame ducks. After gazing at the ducks and discussing the ignoble conduct of domestic ducks laying eggs in the water ("For sister said they did," assured Carrie), Georgie suggested that they go over to a pond on the West-branch and see the blue-jays and red-birds in a nearby plum thicket, the tad-poles in the water, and the water-lilies

on a little islet in the pond. In a twinkling they were off, and after an enjoyable time at the pond with an islet, they, again at Georgie's suggestion, made their way up the creek to a much larger pond, some ten feet in depth, on the east side of which grew a dense woods of elm, oak, hickory, ash, walnut, and sycamore. The boughs of the huge trees kept out the sunlight, except here and there a sunbeam that came down through a little aperture above. The west bank of the pond was fringed with dog-wood, elder bushes, and sumach.

The children sat on the grass and quietly listened to the chatter of the squirrels; the little animals apparently scolding the intruders for disturbing their peaceful pursuit of gathering hickory nuts and acorns.

"Let's go fishing," suggested Georgie, suiting his words with action by drawing from his pocket a long cord and fastening one end to a long stick.

"But we haven't any hook," said the would-be fisher boy, looking a little dismayed.

"Here," said Carrie, "make a hook of this pin," as she handed him the required pin. He fashioned the pin in the shape of a fish-hook and attached it to the loose end of the cord, dug up an angle or fish-worm, baited the hook, and sat alongside of the little girl on the grassy bank to try his luck at fishing for cat-fish, sun-fish, suckers, bass, cray-fish, turtles, or whatever proved to be hungry enough to swallow an appetitizing worm dangling from an innocent-looking cord.

"Now," said the boy, in a whisper, "we must be very quiet or the fish will not bite."

After remaining quiet for a few minutes, but what seemed to her hours, Carrie suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, Georgie! look at that funny owl in that tree yonder."

"Sh——h, be quiet, you scared the fish away from my hook," whispered Georgie.

After another interval of quietude, Carrie leaned over close to the boy's ear, and spoke in a half whisper, "Say, Georgie, do you see that owl winking at us; what does he do it for? That's the way brother Walter does when that cow-boy Ike comes to court sister."

"Don't know what he winks for," whispered Georgie, "but owls are wise, like Socrates, papa says; but be very quiet, Carrie, and we will soon have a big fish."

Another few minutes of solitude, and Carrie said aloud, forgetting about the fish, "Who is Socrates, Georgie?"

"Sh——h, be still, I had a bite. My, but that's a big fish; I'll get him pretty soon," said Georgie, encouragingly.

"But who is Socrates anyway?" whispered Carrie persistently.

"Oh, I guess he used to be president of the United States," answered Georgie, thinking the presidency was about the highest honor to which a wise man could attain.

After another interval of quietness Carrie became sleepy and lay her head against the boy's shoulder and closed her eyes. The boy braced himself against an old stump, and with much anxiety watched his improvised fishing rod and line, and the owl kept on blinking as though he, too, were getting sleepy.

CHAPTER II.

THE INDIANS.

In a field south of the Brandon house, Henry Brandon, a tall, thoughtful-looking man, with dark eyes, hair and beard, was turning up the loose black loam, with his plow and team of iron-gray horses. As the well-trained and willing horses made their way across the big field, Mr. Brandon kept his dark but mild-looking eyes steadily on the upturning soil; one could easily detect the thoughtful expression on his face, for he was thinking out his plans for the future, while he mechanically followed the plow. So intense were his thoughts that he became oblivious to his immediate surroundings, therefore he was totally unaware of the approach of two persons on horseback behind him. His meditations were so suddenly interrupted by a low, gruff "How do," that he was, though possessing a quiet disposition, fairly startled. He turned quickly around, stopping the horses as he did so. There, astride two little calico Indian ponies, sat two strapping big Indians, attired in raw-hide breeches, around which were fastened belts, in which could be seen scalping knives. Moccasins were on their feet, shawls were drawn around their shoulders, raw-hide bands were drawn around the top part of their heads, but lacking the adornment of feathers usually worn by some tribes, while from the end of their noses hung rings. Their hair was braided and hung down their backs.

As the two Indians slid to the ground from their ponies and came toward Mr. Brandon, the latter thought of Indian massacres that he had read about, and, realizing that he was unarmed, felt helpless; but there was no

alternative but to brave the situation, and, keeping up an appearance of courage, but with a watchful eye on the scalping knives, he awaited results. The shorter, but heavier, of the two red-skins handed the settler a paper, saying as he did so, "Me Chief Big Bear, he [pointing to his tall slender companion] Little Pipe." Mr. Brandon thought, as he took the paper from the Indian's hand, that the chief looked like a big bear all right, but he could see no resemblance of the other Indian to a little pipe. The paper contained a written statement which said that these Indians belonged to a band of Oto Indians traveling through the country from a visit to a tribe in Nebraska to their reservation in the Indian Territory, and were dependent on the settlers for subsistence as they passed through, advising said settlers to give them something to eat or a little money. The paper was signed by the Indian agent.

Mr. Brandon was debating within his mind whether to go with them to the house or direct them to Carlton's, as he had no money in his pocket, and was about to decide on the latter proposition on the grounds that Mr. Carlton had been in the country longer than he, and was therefore more accustomed to dealing with Indians, when Chief Big Bear asked, "Where you house?" Mr. Brandon, disregarding the question, said, as he pointed to Mr. Carlton, who was on a ridge over a mile distant searching for a cornerstone of a section of land, "See that man? he take you to a house." The Indians merely glanced in the direction indicated, their keen eyesight seeing instantly the man, and Big Bear uttered a gruff sound, not unlike the "ooph" of a bear, at which both Indians rode toward the man on the ridge beyond the tall trees across the creek. Mr. Brandon, feeling greatly

relieved, continued his plowing, keeping a sharp outlook for more savages. In the meantime the Indians changed their course, and came up to the Brandon house, but on the opposite side from the field in which Mr. Brandon was working. At about this time, too, the latter had reached the far end of the field and walked to the creek to drink from the cool spring at the foot of an elm.

As the Indians dismounted from their ponies, Brandon's bob-tailed yellow dog set up a combination of barking, growling and howling, backing toward the house as the Indians stalked forward; finally, with a yelp that indicated a failing of courage, the dog ran around the corner of the house, lowering its bob-tail as much as the shortness of that member would allow.

The Indians, disdaining the pale-face's custom of knocking at the door before entering, walked right in. Mrs. Brandon was much frightened, but retained her presence of mind, and faced the intruders bravely. Chief Big Bear handed her the message from the Indian agent, greeting her with a gruff "How do."

Mrs. Brandon gave them each a loaf of bread, the last of the baking. Big Bear and Little Pipe, thrusting their respective loaves in grain sacks, with which they had been provided by the Indian agent, turned and walked out of the house.

Little Pipe's alert eyes caught the sight of a Plymouth Rock rooster, a thoroughbred that Mrs. Brandon had purchased, and immediately his appetite craved the taste of chicken, and pointing to the rooster, he uttered a few gruff words to his chief. Little Pipe's appetite for chicken seemed to be contagious, for the chief likewise became hungered for chicken, and, turning to Mrs. Brandon, said, pointing to the rooster, then to himself, "Me

want." Mrs. Brandon was on the point of remonstrating, but on second thought feared that she might incur the chief's displeasure, and reluctantly nodded her head in consent; whereupon the two Indian braves began a merry chase after the rooster, causing chickens to fly and run in all directions amid great cackling, and the barking of the yellow dog, who, however, was safely hid under the front porch.

Little Pipe, the faster of the two, was about to grab the tail of the rooster, when he caught his big foot under the neck-yoke which was fastened to the end of the wagon tongue, and unceremoniously fell over the wagon tongue, his great length lying stretched out on the ground, while the rooster made for the chicken-house door.

Big Bear started to follow the frightened rooster in the chicken house, but he was not accustomed to entering the small doors of the white man's chicken houses, and, failing to stoop low enough, his forehead came in contact, with considerable force, with the top of the door casing, which resulted in a temporary rest from chasing chickens, amid a few ugly sounding words that might have been Oto swear words. In the meantime the rooster came out of the chicken house to look after his frightened hens, just as Little Pipe made a dash for the chicken-house door; but that stalwart brave was entirely unacquainted with clothes-lines, and, in his rapid strides, with an eye singled wholly to fat, juicy chicken roasted over a good fire, he failed to notice the clothes-line, which caught him just under the chin and threw him flat on his back, so quickly that he was almost dazed. The bob-tailed dog at this juncture regained courage and ran out from under the porch, determined on taking a hand in affairs, and, grabbing the prostrate Little Pipe by his breeches leg,

began tugging in his endeavor to arouse the Indian from his apparent dazed condition. As the dog's teeth entered through the breeches into the Indian's flesh, it had the desired effect, and he instantly arose, at which the dog scurried back to his safe retreat under the porch. The rooster was finally caught, beheaded, and chucked in a grain sack with one of the loaves of bread, regardless of the intermixture of blood with bread.

As the Indians prepared to depart, Big Bear caught sight of a rug, which the previous day had gotten wet by the water seeping in under the front door during a severe rain storm, and had been laid out on the ground to dry. He decided that a rug containing patches of red, green, and blue would make an ideal blanket on which to sit while riding his pony, and, by motions, indicated his wish to appropriate said rug to his own use. Mrs. Brandon again reluctantly consented, and soon the dusky invaders were mounted and riding toward Carlton's—the dog coming out from his retreat and making loud demonstrations at the departing Otos.

As the Indians were crossing the field between Brandon's house and the creek, they came upon Pete.

Now, Pete claimed to be a very brave man. He had, according to his own statements, been born a slave in the South, and during the Civil War had run away from his master, joined a Union colored regiment, and in a skirmish had actually, in company with other soldiers, captured his former master, who was a captain in the Confederate service. But Indians, according to Pete's mind, were different from rebel soldiers. Indians were treacherous, didn't fight in the open, but slipped up unawares and cut your throat and took your scalp as a trophy.

So when the colored ex-soldier saw the Indians coming he forgot that he ever had been a "Linkum so'dger"; every vestige of bravery escaping into the bottom of his boots, and since his boots contained holes in the toes of them, the bravery must have escaped through those holes, leaving him completely destitute of that much-honored attribute.

The day before Mr. Brandon had paid Pete three months' wages, which money he had sewed up in an old tobacco pouch and secreted in the bottom of his only holeless pocket. He reasoned that the safest plan was to be his own banker and keep his hard-earned money always with him. Poor, frightened Pete drew this precious little bag of money from the depths of his pocket and threw it at the Indians, as a sort of detention till he could make good his escape; then quickly, but nervously, dropped the traces from the single-trees, gathered up the lines, and with a yell sprang on one of the mules, and, striking both mules with the ends of the lines, got them on a run for the creek. In his hurry he had jumped astride the mule called Jinny. At any ordinary time he would have ridden the mule Jack, for Jinny was not broke to ride. However, the suddenness of it all and the confusion so frightened Jinny that she ran, taking no time to get rid of her rider. But, as the mules crossed the creek and dashed up a high bank alongside of a deep pond, Jinny cooled down enough to realize that there was more weight on her back than she wished to carry, and, with head down, legs stiffened, and back bowed, she let out a loud bray, that Pete thought at first was a war whoop of an Indian; and by a peculiar quick up-and-down movement the frightened negro was sent headlong into the pond, resembling the leaping of a big bull-frog. As the curly head of the



—the frightened negro was sent headlong into the pond, resembling the leap of a bull-frog.

colored man arose above the surface of the water, amid much gurgling and splashing, the mules disappeared.

Pete soon emerged from the cool water, and, with dripping clothes, and hatless, ran through the heavy woods bordering the creek, until he discovered a large wild gooseberry bush; under this he crawled, lying flat on the ground. "Good Lawd," he prayed in a half whisper, "sabe me from dem bloodthirsty Injuns. If I eber git outen dis place alive, I'se gwine right back down to de Souf."

The Indians picked up the wallet containing Pete's money and proceeded leisurely toward the Carlton house. Crossing the creek, they ascended a hill or bluff back of the grove of big trees, to a frame house, made of lumber sawed from native trees at the sawmill over on the river. The make of the house indicated that the builder had not been accustomed to handling carpenter tools. The whole structure leaned a little toward the creek below, as though it had become dizzy looking at the narrow valley and was inclined to pitch forward down the steep side of the bluff. However, to counteract such a tendency, two heavy logs had been placed in such a way that one end rested on the ground, the other against the leaning side of the house, thus acting as braces, or props.

In the front room, the door of which was open, lay, on a lounge, a light-haired man, asleep. The premature gray hairs on his head, and the deep lines of his face, and a certain stern expression indicated a much-troubled life. One could see that he had suffered, but that that suffering had, contrary to the effect on some people, made him rather severe and more or less pessimistic. Still, the bushy eyebrows indicated a determination of will power that would not give way to trifles.

The Indians walked into the room, and the "How do" of the chief aroused Lew Carlton from his peaceful slumbers. He had not been asleep long, and was tired from his search for the cornerstone on the ridge. He seized a buggy whip and started toward the intruders, yelling, "Get out of here, you red-skins, or I'll give you a cut across the face; coming in here and arousing me from my sleep!"

The Indians, seeing at once that this man was no eastern tenderfoot, hurried out of the house, mounted their ponies and went their way. Mr. Carlton closed the door and was about to return to the lounge when he espied a note on the center table, written by his older daughter, Mary, in which she stated that she had gone to Brandon's to visit Mrs. Brandon, and that he would find victuals for dinner in the cupboard. "And let me see," he said, looking at his watch, "Walter won't be in from the sheep for two hours yet. Guess I'll finish my nap." And, suiting the action to the word, he lay down on the lounge again and was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER III.

IN PURSUIT.

Other Indians had passed through the sparsely settled neighborhood during the forenoon. And when Mary Carlton told Mrs. Brandon that she had not seen Georgie and Carrie since the latter left for the Brandons', the two women became very anxious about the children; and when Ike Morrow, who had been a cow-boy, but was now working as a farmhand for Mr. Brandon, came in from a field farther up the creek, which he had just finished plowing, Mrs. Brandon told him about the Indians and her anxiety about the children. Ike didn't appear to be worried about either the Indians or the children.

Ike Morrow was six foot four, slim as a rail, and his face appeared weather beaten, while he wore a long, light-colored moustache, the ends of which were twisted in long, straight lines, Napoleon III style. But this singular cow-boy, whose temper never seemed ruffled, though quaint in his ways, was such a good-natured, kindly sort of a fellow that everybody liked him. And he liked everybody, and particularly Miss Mary Carlton, the only girl he ever took the trouble to "shine up" for, as he said, and pay his respects to. And Mary Carlton, deprived of the society of a more settled country, liked "Cow-boy Ike," as he was called, better than any young man she had met.

"The Indians won't hurt the children, Mrs. Brandon," assured the well-meaning cow-boy, as he finished drinking his third cup of water.

"You drink a good deal, Ike," remarked Mary, half teasingly.

"Yes, Miss Mary, but never anything stronger than water; and if the Legislature puts that prohibition law

to the vote of the people, Ike Morrow, for one, will cast his vote for the prohibition of the liquor traffic. It has ruined more good men and women than all of the wars the United States ever had. I say *down* with the liquor traffic, remove it from the temptation of our boys, and thus save many a future home from ruin." And the cowboy sat down as though exhausted from delivering what seemed to him a lengthy lecture on temperance. Ike was a man of few words, and it was seldom he talked at much length and with so much enthusiasm.

"I can't help feeling uneasy about the children, though," said Mrs. Brandon. "Georgie said he and Carrie were going to see Mary's ducks, and Mary hasn't seen the children, though she came by the pond where the ducks were long after the children left here."

"I think it would be a good idea to hunt them up," said Mary, looking rather pleadingly at Ike. That look was enough for Ike; he would do anything for Mary Carlton, and he immediately betook himself off to search for the children.

Soon after Ike had gone, the team of mules Pete had been working came to the house, but no one was with them. Mrs. Brandon, wondering what had happened to Pete, went to the field to inform her husband. When Mr. and Mrs. Brandon returned, Ike had also returned, having seen no sign of either the children or Pete. The women were much excited now, and Mr. Brandon could not help showing some anxiety.

"I think you had better jump on one of the ponies and go tell Carlton about the missing children and Pete, Ike," said Mr. Brandon. "Tell Lew to come over," he added, somewhat excitedly, as Ike rode away.

In a short time Ike returned with Lew Carlton. "What's up, anyway?" inquired the latter, sternly, though one could see that he, too, was more excited than he was fain to acknowledge.

"I think we had best organize a searching party right away," suggested Mr. Brandon, becoming more excited.

"Yes, I think we had," assented Mr. Carlton; then turning to the cow-boy said, "What do you think about it, Ike?"

After a little silence, Ike spoke out, "I expect the children are playing in the timber and don't know it's time to come home."

"What about Pete?" asked Carlton.

"I expect Pete got scared at the Indians and ran away," answered Ike.

"I am afraid the Indians carried off the children," said Mrs. Brandon, tears coming to her eyes.

"Don't know what they would do that for," answered Ike, doubtfully.

"Oh!" remarked Carlton, "maybe I made the Indians mad, for when two of them awakened me from a nap I was enjoying, I took a buggy whip to them and told them to get off the place, and Indians don't like a whip; it hurts their pride."

"Don't believe the Indians would dare do harm," said Ike, thoughtfully; "there are too many soldiers at Fort Riley."

However, it was decided to organize two searching parties: Mr. Carlton and his son Walter to search along the creek; while Mr. Brandon and Ike rode to the divide that lay between the sources of the two branches of the creek, where Ike believed the Indians would assemble to hunt antelope. Although it was noon, no time was taken

to eat dinner, but each man placed in his pockets sandwiches prepared by the women. Mr. Carlton returned to his home to get Walter to help in the search, while Mr. Brandon and Ike mounted their ponies and followed up the East-branch for three or four miles, when they arrived at Charlie Tilton's, the only other settler above the junction of the two branches. Here they could hear the whooping of a band of Indians, five hundred of them, who had surrounded a small herd of antelope, the only antelope left in the country. Though the Indians were some distance out on the great divide between the tributaries of the Walnut river and those flowing southeast through the Flint Hills, still Charlie Tilton and his nephew, Frank Tilton, were having all they could do to hold a broncho that had become terrified by the yelling savages.

Mr. Brandon explained to the Tiltons about their search for the children.

"I guess we had better join in the search," drawled big tall Charlie Tilton, and soon the broncho was securely tied, and "Long Charlie," as Mr. Tilton was usually called, and his heavy, broad-shouldered nephew mounted mules, and the party of four men were riding toward the band of noisy red-skins, who were formed in a circle, that was rapidly closing in on the frightened antelope. Not far from the antelope hunters were a number of wagons drawn by ponies and loaded with squaws and papooses and tent fixtures.

"Now is our chance," said Ike, "if we can ride up to those wagons while the warriors are busy with the hunt, we can see if the children are there; for if the chief and his Little Pipe did take their spite out on Lew Carlton for getting after them with a whip, by stealing Georgie

and Carrie, most likely they will be in one of those wagons.

"Come on, then," urged Mr. Brandon, with not a little excitement, as he whipped his pony to almost a run. The others followed suit, the mules switching their tails in a general dissatisfaction at carrying such heavy men at so rapid a gait. But before the white men arrived at the wagons the last antelope had met its sad fate, and the braves were returning to the wagons, while the squaws began climbing out of the wagons to take off the hides, and quarter the meat of the dead antelope.

"Here," said Ike, as he reined in his pony behind a plum thicket and dismounted, "wait here, we are too late, no good going on now. If they have the children, and we are detected nosing around here, there might be trouble, and he constantly examined his rifle and revolvers. The other men did the same.

After the lapse of considerable time the Otos continued their march toward the Flint Ridge, or Flint Hills. In the distance could be seen a long, blue, hazy-looking ridge; this was the Flint Ridge.

"Let's be going," suggested Mr. Brandon, somewhat impatiently.

"Not yet," cautioned the cow-boy; "we dare not follow too closely—we've got to keep at a safe distance."

"But how are we going to get the children?" inquired Mr. Brandon, anxiously.

"We've got to take chances. Come some sort of a Yankee trick on them," responded Ike, "and if the trick don't work, we'll have to send to Fort Riley for some soldiers.

"Suppose we send for the soldiers now?" drawled Long Charlie. "I don't see how we are going to get the children from five hundred heathen Indians, trick or no trick."

"They won't dare take the children into the reservation. The Indian agent would find out about it, then there would be the devil to pay," said Ike.

"What will they do with the children?" asked Mr. Brandon, fearfully.

"I s'pose they will let them go just before entering the reservation, then we may get them," reasoned Ike.

"Then what would be the use of sending for troops if we don't play a trick on those red-skins?" asked Long Charlie.

"Because these Indians are liable to camp out for a week or more somewhere in the Hills," responded Ike.

"Lordy," ejaculated Frank, looking serious, "is there a probability of us having to wait around in those beastly hills a week?" Frank had gotten lost in the Flint Hills once, and had had considerable difficulty in finding his way out, and did not relish the idea of remaining among them any length of time.

"I don't like those hills anyway," he complained. "Seems like one was all cooped up in a sort of a trap and no way out."

"Guess Frank is afraid he won't get to see his girl Sunday evening," remarked Long Charlie teasingly.

Ike sobered up at this remark, and Frank acted somewhat embarrassed, but wisely neither said a word. Frank was Ike's rival in his attentions to Mary Carlton. She liked Frank's easy, jovial manner, but she also liked Ike's kindly-looking eyes and his manliness.

"Guess we'd best be going," said Ike at last, noticing that the Indians were nearly out of sight. Again the four men were riding across the prairie of the divide. As they neared the Hills, the long blue ridge became more broken until the ridge seemed to have been transformed into a

range of hills. And when the divide was crossed, there lay before them hill after hill, each one like a huge mound, with great lime stones cropping out in ledges along their sides, while innumerable little flint stones covered the surface of the hills. There was no regularity in the position of these mound-like hills, each one seeming to be independent from the other, and surrounded by a circular valley; little valleys everywhere. The tops of the smallest hills were on a level with the upland prairie of the divide, and only the largest ones rose above. To get among the hills one was obliged to go down a steep bluff from the prairie, and when once down, there was no outlook, unless one took the trouble to climb one of the steep hills. As the ponies and mules were urged down the steep descent, the cow-boy shaded his eyes with his broad hand and looked toward a large hill on the top of which rose a pile of stones about eight or ten feet high.

"What does that pile of stones signify?" asked Mr. Brandon, following Ike's gaze.

"An Indian guide," informed Ike, as he dexterously guided his pony along a ledge. "Follow me, fellows, we must make for that guide."

It was a hazardous descent, in which all of the riders, except Ike, were obliged to dismount in order to keep their animals from slipping or stumbling, Frank being saved the trouble of dismounting by falling head first over his mule's head while the latter was attempting to brace its forefeet to keep from sliding.

"Gosh all fish-hooks," said Frank regaining his feet and rubbing his nose, which had come into contact with a flint stone in his unwonted leap from the mule's back, "if I've got to stay in this all-fired cooped-up country long I'll have spurs put on my mule's feet so he can't slip."

After winding around a number of hills, the party dismounted, tied their steeds to a clump of red-bud and ascended the large hill to the huge pile of stones.

"See that other pile of stones on that big hill across yonder?" said Ike, pointing. "Well that is another Indian guide, and there is one beyond that yet, and beyond still another, and so on across the whole range. The Indians will follow those guides in crossing the hills. We'll get the general direction of that guide from this one and follow accordingly and we may come on to those Otos most any time. We can hurry now, for we may get close to them without being seen." Ike jotted down in his memory the various landmarks between their present position and the next guide, and proceeded down the hill, followed in a more or less stumbling manner by the others. When they arrived at the red-bud bushes, neither ponies nor mules were there. One mule had broken his rope and made off in haste, the other mule becoming uneasy at the disappearing of his mate, had pulled up the red-bud bush, to which he had been tied, by the roots and followed in like haste. The ponies had evidently pulled and threshed around, from the appearance of the many hoof-marks on the ground, until they broke loose too and joined their long-eared cousins.

The astonished and chagrined men looked at each other in consternation, then Frank spoke, pointing to the steep bluff in the distance down which they had come from the upland. "Gee! Look at 'em, there they go up that bluff skalehooten."

They all looked. The leading mule had just gained the top of the bluff, turned around, looked down the valley toward the men, as much as to say: "I'm going home, I wish you were," and with a shake of his long head, in

which his great ears wobbled about as though too long to be controllable, and with a quick upward motion of his heels, he stuck his tail straight up and started on a run for home, followed by the other mule and the two ponies.

"I'll be gad," exclaimed Frank, looking terribly forlorn.

"Guess we're in for it now," said Ike musingly.

"Good thing I've got long legs," remarked Long Charlie cheerfully.

"Well, let's be going, then, and find those children, if they are to be found with those miserable red-skins," urged Mr. Brandon impatiently.

"Well, here goes," said Ike, leading out with long strides, followed closely by Long Charlie and Mr. Brandon, while Frank brought up the rear. They had not gone far before Frank began to lag, puffing almost like a steam engine.

"Wait—a—minute—you—long—legged—fel—lows. I'm get—ting—on the—bum. I—can't—keep up," said Frank between puffs, as he endeavored to quicken his speed, while the others sat down on a ledge of rock to wait.

"I think you had better go back to that Indian guide on the hill and await our return, Frank. We'll lose too much time waiting for you, you puffing steam engine," suggested Long Charlie with a broad grin spreading over his raw-boned features.

"Not on your life, Uncle Charlie," remonstrated Frank. "Do you s'pose I want to be left alone and have a dozen of those red-skins slip up behind me and eat me alive? No-sir-ee-sir-bob-tail-gee-sir." Frank Tilton always had an extra store of slang words at his command, ready for immediate use for all occasions.

"We'll have to go up on this hill to get our bearings," said Ike, after they had wound around hill after hill in their course. On reaching the top, they soon sighted the Indian guide again; but there were only three men on top. Frank had got left behind. When the three were about half-way down, they met Frank still ascending, but he was crawling on his hands and knees part of the time.

"You see, fellows," said Frank jokingly, "here is a sure proof of Darwin's theory of evolution. When I get worn out walking as men do, I walk as monkeys do. When man's methods fail, we naturally revert to the ways of our ancestors, the monkeys. It's natural, gentlemen," continued Frank climbing up on a big boulder preparatory to delivering a lecture on "evolution."

"You'd better come down from your perch," reminded Long Charlie. "We are going on now. No time for monkey lectures. If you remain there, you'll soon find yourself talking to the winds."

"Gad, that's right," assented the would-be lecturer as he hurridely, but rather clumsily, got down from the boulder and half-slid, half-tumbled, panting, after his longer-legged and more lean companions.

It was not long before the party came to a creek bordered here and there by cedars. "We'll follow this creek," said Ike. "More 'an likely the Indians 'll camp for the night somewhere along this creek."

As they followed along the banks of the creek, the ponds became wider, and the small cedar on the sides of the steep banks were replaced by groves of elm, oak, ash, hickory, walnut and other deciduous trees native to southern Kansas.

"See here," yelled Frank, who was some distance to

the rear, "I can't go any farther, my legs refuse to move. I've got to rest."

"I wish Frank was in Halifax," said Mr. Brandon to himself, who was more than anxious to keep right on going until the supposed Indian camp was reached.

"We may as well rest a spell," said Ike, "we can't do any investigating 'till dark, and the Indians are sure to camp near this creek, it is dusk now."

Accordingly they all lay comfortably stretched out on the green grass.

"I'm gettin' darned hungry," complained Frank.

"What are we going to eat, our lunch is all gone?" queried Long Charlie, thoughtfully.

"I've got a fishing line and hook in my pocket. I'll go fishing down at that pond, and you fellows can get some dry timber ready for a fire for frying fish," suggested Ike.

"As soon as my blamed legs are movable, I'll go shoot a jack-rabbit or a prairie-chicken," volunteered Frank.

"No you don't shoot anything," commanded Ike. "The Indians may hear the report of the gun and be on their guard."

After some little time Ike returned with four big catfish and two sun-fish. A fire was made and the fish were being prepared for the fry.

"Charlie, if you will go back of that heavy woods on the other side of the creek, you will find an old German sheep rancher living in a small stone house; borrow a frying pan of him."

"All right, Ike," responded Long Charlie, as he started for the creek. He made his way to the place indicated and found a white-bearded, bald-headed old German sitting in the doorway.

"How do you do?" greeted Long Charlie.

"Goot, goot; how vas you?" welcomed the kindly old German.

"We would like to borrow a frying pan to fry some fish we caught," said Long Charlie. Then explained: "There are four of us, the other three are across the creek. We are trailing the Indians; we think they stole two children; we stopped over there to rest and eat."

"So——, so——," thoughtfully mused the German, stroking his white beard with his hand; then, as several thoughts seemed to enter his mind simultaneously, he began: "You shust go pack und dell de odder fellows to pring de feesh to mine house und fry tem here. Me see de Inyuns come py mine house, put no vite shilders deed I see, put dey might pe heed een der vagons. Ven you de feesh hafe eaten, I mit you go to de Inyuns und see some of de fun. I pee an olt man, put can walk like fordy, und I make straight heet mit der gun."

"All right, thank you," answered Long Charlie; "but you are a pretty lively man for your age. What is your name?"

"Mine name ees Vilhelm Vallenstein. I hafe been een dis country for fooften years. I hafe pig lots of sheeps. All of de olt seddlers know Vilhelm Vallenstein."

Long Charlie hurriedly returned to carry the glad tidings to the rest of the party across the creek, and in a short time all were seated around Wilhelm Wallenstein's table, in the only room in the stone house, eating fried fish, also additional articles of food from Wilhelm's cupboard, which he insisted should be eaten along with the fish.

After supper the four pursuers, with Wilhelm as a guide, made their way down the creek under cover of the

darkness of the night. After what seemed to Frank a never-ending tramp, the light of camp-fires was seen ahead. The old German stopped short, and turning half way round, shook his forefinger at his followers, saying, "Don't you von leetle vord speak; put shust you pe mighty steel ven you valk." The men silently consented and all cautiously resumed their walk, until they were kneeling behind a plum thicket watching the Indians seated around their camp-fires contentedly smoking their long-stemmed pipes, silently thinking of the times of the cheerful past when they chased the bison over the plains; then, as a scowl came over some old brave's face, it told of the sudden reverting of his thoughts of the happy past to the gloomy future of being obliged to live under restrictions in a reservation—the only sport being the shooting of the half-wild Texas steers turned loose among them periodically by the Government authorities. Poor, unhappy Indian! thy only happiness lies, perhaps, in the Great Beyond, where will be the happy hunting grounds.

After an interval of almost breathless silence, during which the ambushers remained in more or less strained positions, they very cautiously assembled on their knees in a circle and held a council of war, which was conducted in low whispers.

"What shall we do now?" asked Mr. Brandon in a whisper.

"I'll tell you what let's do," said the ruthless Frank, half aloud, who was too apt to see only the ludicrous at a critical moment, "let's startle the natives by our superior marksmanship; give them an exhibition of shooting that'll make their hair stand on end, make them think Buffalo Bill and his cow-boys are after them. Ike, you're a cow-boy and a crack shot; you hit that earring dangling from

that scowling-looking Indian, wouldn't he jump and snort, though? And Dutchy," continued Frank, looking at the German patronizingly, "you knock that giraffe-necked pipe out of that big chief's mouth with your Winchester. And Uncle Charlie, you just take a shot at that long, slim warrior's big toe sticking up in front of that camp-fire. And Mr. Brandon, you might shoot the tail off of that spotted yaller and white dog gnawing at that old bone. And I——well, I'm not a crackerjack at shooting, but I think I could manage to put a hole through the top part of that tent, just high enough to graze the top of that squaw's head, so she would scream and make lots of confusion. However, I think I can be of greater service by yelling at the top of my voice: 'I'm Buffalo Bill; you Injuns better clear out of here or my cow-boys will get in dead earnest and shoot to kill, instead of simply knocking pipes out of mouths and rings out of noses.' Jiminy crack corn, I've got a better plan yet, suppose we——"

"You shust keep steel, and hear de spoken of de odders," commanded the German.

"What about that trick, Ike?" questioned Long Charlie, as he stretched out his long legs in an endeavor to relieve them from the cramped position in which they had been.

"The Indians never saw me in that north field, while they were passing through our neighborhood. Guess I'll walk boldly in among them alone and ask the chief if any of his braves saw any stray cattle. They will recognize me at once as a cow-boy. I'll sit down and take a smoke with them and keep a sharp outlook for some signs of Georgie and Carrie. If that don't work, the only thing to do will be to follow them closely until they enter the reservation, while some one informs the commanding officer at Fort Riley."

"Why not wait till they all turn in for the night, then quietly crawl about and investigate?" suggested Mr. Brandon, becoming desperate.

"If the children are with them, they will even now have sentinels posted to watch," said Ike.

At this juncture an accident occurred which was unfortunate for all concerned. Frank was sitting on a small log examining his rifle, and patting the barrel with his hand, saying as he did so, "My bonny old rifle, you are liable to kill many an Injun before we get out of this scrape; you are my old standby, defender of home and native land." As he finished this sentence he leaned backwards a trifle, the log turned, and the proprietor of the defender of home and native land turned a complete somersault. In the process of turning, Frank's rifle was accidentally fired, the bullet making its way straight into the Indian camp. One Indian brave gave a blood-curdling yell and apparently sprang about four feet into the air and fell backwards, while, sure enough, the pipe was knocked out of the mouth of another warrior. Immediately there was a great commotion in camp. Squaws came running out of the tents, papooses set up lusty yells, warriors were running hither and thither, grasping their guns, the several chiefs appeared to be giving orders, and the spotted yellow and white dog began, in company with other dogs, a great barking.

"Mine Gott, poys, dat Frank hafe got us een von great troubles," said the German, as he got up and ran toward the creek; the other men followed suit, as Ike said, in a low voice, "Run, boys, for your lives, and when you can't run any longer, hide somewhere till morning, but let's try to keep together."



"Mine Gott boys, dat Frank hafe got us een von great troubles," said the German.

Frank was the last to leave, as it took him some little time to right himself around and rise from the ungraceful position in which he found himself after the somersault, and when he did start to run he found that one foot had become entangled in a dead wild-grape vine entwined about the log. This threw the now much-frightened young man forward on his face. After some difficulty he managed to disentangle his foot from the vine, and began a rapid retreat over stones and through plum thickets, until he plunged into the creek waist deep. He went splashing through the water, gained the bank on the other side and resumed his running. He was aware that his delay in starting had allowed the others to distance him, and he felt decidedly lonely. "I may have to fight those Indians alone," he thought, as he made a flying leap over a small ravine. But he was almost overcome with fear when he became conscious of the fact that he was totally unarmed. His mind had become so confused by his unexpected fall and the general mix-up of affairs that he forgot to pick up his rifle in taking his flight.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRE, WATER AND TORNADO.

At dawn the next day the five men, who in the darkness had become separated from each other, came together, and all went to the German rancher's stone house. What was to be done next was the thought uppermost in each man's mind; even Cow-boy Ike and the German rancher were at a loss to suggest a new plan of procedure.

"If you hadn't tumbled off that log we'd a-been all right, Frank," complained Ike.

"I wonder if I killed that Indian," said Frank, with a careless disregard to Ike's complaint.

"I tink I petter send von of mine herders mit a pony to de fort to get some soldiers," suggested Wilhelm.

At this juncture all were startled by the appearance of an Indian in the doorway. A rather short but well-built young Indian he was, dressed in cow-boy fashion, a pair of revolvers dangling from his belt.

"Hello there, Cherokee," greeted Ike, "come in; you are just the fellow we want. Where are you bound for?"

"I am hunting for stray cattle belonging to the John Elton ranch over on the river," replied the Indian, in good English. He belonged to the Cherokee nation, but had attended a public school and adopted the white man's ways, and at this time was herding cattle for John Elton, the biggest rancher in the country. He went altogether by the name of "Cherokee."

"Can you talk Oto?" asked Ike.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Good," said Ike. Then he explained about the search for the children, the episode of the night, and requested Cherokee to ride up to the Oto band, inquire after stray

cattle, and remain with them until he discovered whether the children were in their possession.

Cherokee gladly consented to try this plan, and soon took his departure for the Oto camp.

Within a few hours the Indian cow-boy returned, saying that he found the Indian braves somewhat scattered looking for the person who had the audacity to fire into their camp; and that it was an easy matter for him to look into the wagons and tents, the squaws offering no objection; he taking the precaution to pretend at taking a fancy to one of the young squaws, a daughter of one of the chiefs. Cherokee declared that there were no signs of the white children about the camp.

Frank was much concerned about the Indian that jumped and fell when the rifle was accidentally fired.

"Did I really kill a big Injun, Cherokee?" he asked. But Frank tried to appear greatly crestfallen when he was informed that the bullet simply made a little notch in the Indian's right ear; that it was the suddenness of his spring into the air that caused him to fall over backwards.

After another consultation it was decided that the four original searchers return home to see what success Lew and Walter Carlton had had in their search. Accordingly, while the sun was still on its rise from the eastern horizon, the men trudged along until, about midday, they ascended the steep bluff to the upland prairie of the divide. Here they halted and with coats off, and hats drawn over their eyes to shade them from the hot sun, the dusty pedestrians stretched their tired legs out on the grass and munched at a lunch of bread and mutton sandwiches provided by the good-natured old German. It was wiltingly hot, the usual refreshing breeze had died down to a dead calm. Not a cloud obscured the sky.

"There's going to be something doing today," said Ike simply. The others looked askance at him, but the cowboy's steady gaze seemed to rest on a motionless sunflower, while his thoughts appeared to be a study. Once he looked sharply at the southwest horizon, then resumed his apparent study of the lonely sunflower.

After a long silence, Frank, who could contain himself no longer spoke. "Ike, what's going to happen today? Another skirmish with the red-skins, in which somebody's gun forgets to keep silent and fires a shot through a brave's ear or nose, and knocks two or three pipes out of other warriors' mouths?"

Ike, who considered Frank's superfluous slangy insinuations ill-befitting to one who made a pretence of calling on such nice girls as Mary Carlton, disregarded the latter's question, and exclaimed: "Boys, I think we had better return to the Hills. I look for a tornado in these parts this afternoon, and I know where there is a natural cave in which we can take shelter."

But Mr. Brandon was very anxious to get home to see if the children had been found; and Frank Tilton was very outspoken against Ike's plan. "I wouldn't go back to those flint 'pyramids' for their weight in gold. No, sir, not me," he said vehemently. "I'll take my chances on a level terra firma with a tornado or a desperado, whether from Colorado or El Dorado."

The party finally arrived at a decision to resume their journey homeward, though one could see that Ike looked a little worried, and almost constantly scanned the southwestern horizon. The stillness of the atmosphere was almost oppressive, and the sun continued to fairly blaze down on them. Presently dark, ominous-looking clouds began to appear in the southwest, and as they floated

northeasterly, queer movements were noticed among them. Some appeared to writhe and twist into many queer contortions, others rolled, and one cloud seemed to float swiftly in one direction, while another took an opposite direction.

"I believe we had better return to the Hills," said Frank with not a little excitement.

"Too late now," reminded Ike. "We've got to face it now. We could never get half way back to the Hills before the twister would be upon us. But it's coming. I feel it in my bones, and all signs favor a tornado this afternoon."

At this unpleasant and rather startling news the other men's faces turned pale, and their eyes took on a wild look.

"There she comes," said Ike, as a funnel-shaped black cloud appeared to descend until the small end of it touched the ground. "Lay flat on the ground, face downward, and clutch the grass roots with your fingers," shouted Ike, as he set the example.

In a short time every man was lying as Ike had commanded. They had not long to wait, for with a deafening roar the tornado was upon them, but in an incredible short time all was over, and the tornado was away to the northeast on its course, now sweeping all before it, now high in the air, then down again, then rising, like a big rubber ball bounding over the prairie, only its funnel shape being unlike the appearance of a ball.

"Anybody hurt?" said Ike, rising and looking about him.

"Say, Ike, if any more of those twisting, roaring black funnels are liable to come this way, I move that we return to the Hills and find that cave," said Frank, who found himself lying with his feet in the opposite direction from what they were before the passing of the tornado.

No one was hurt, though Long Charlie declared in his usual drawling tone that he had been picked up bodily, turned around four times in one second, and let down very easily to the ground two rods from the place he occupied before. All four men were hatless, and Long Charlie's rifle was found at a considerable distance from his lighting place, the end of the barrel thrust six inches into the ground, the gun stalk sticking up in the air.

"At whose ever house that tornado stops, the owner will get four additional hats," thoughtfully mused Frank, "and one big red handkerchief with white pokey dots all over it," he added, as he discovered that his handkerchief, which had been hanging loosely from his hip pocket, had also accompanied the hats on their mysterious journey to—no one could tell where.

"What's that smoke away to the southwest?" remarked Mr. Brandon.

"A prairie fire," quickly answered Ike, with some apprehension, "and we'd better get a move on us, too. If we can reach the head of the East-branch before the fire comes, we will be all right, as it won't cross the creek."

At this they walked as rapidly as possible for some time. But the lead fire, fanned by an increasing wind, came faster and faster, until the men were obliged to set out a back fire in order to check the oncoming flames, while they stood in the center of the burned space made by the back fire. As the back fire met the head fire the men were obliged to lie down in order to escape, as much as possible, the suffocating smoke. Soon the main fire had passed around each side of the little group of men and was hurrying on with its destruction to vegetation. Now they discovered a new difficulty: they could not pass the side fire, though it was burning partly against the wind.

"We've got to follow in the wake of the lead fire until something stops it, before we can get around to the creek; and in doing that we will strike the West-branch instead of the East-branch. This will cause us to make a wide detour," explained Ike solemnly.

"Gee——whiz," complained Frank, "I am already so tired I can hardly move one foot before the other." After striking northward at a rather slow gait, and with a more or less despondent feeling, they were forced from sheer exhaustion to throw themselves down on the blackened ground to rest. Frank had no more than touched the ground when he sprang up, surprisingly quick for one so tired as he professed to be.

"What's the matter, Frank, aren't you going to remain with us and rest a spell?" inquired Long Charlie, a broad grin spreading over his features.

"Great, Scott," ejaculated Frank, "I sat on a hot coal of fire." Before he sat down again he carefully scraped the ashes away from a space that would admit of the largeness of his avoirdupois. "Hadn't we better be going?" said Mr. Brandon, with a glance at the western sun, thoughts of the lost children still haunting his mind. They all arose without a word and proceeded on their weary journey over the scorched ground. It was long after sundown before they reached the source of the West-branch, which consisted of a small pond fed by a small spring, a little rivulet leading from one end of the pond to another similar pond. A plum thicket grew out of the north bank of the pond. In this shady thicket the sooty-faced wanderers took shelter, after taking turns at drinking, on their hands and knees, from the clear, cool spring. The short, curly buffalo grass and the pear-shaped cactus on an alkali spot near the plum thicket had saved the bushy little trees from catching fire.

The party being hungry, and the plums not yet ripe, a few dry sticks were gathered, a fire was kindled, and they proceeded to roast a jack-rabbit that Ike had shot. This was done by each man thrusting a pointed stick into a portion of the meat and holding it over the fire till done.

The party, their hunger being partially satisfied, continued their tramp down the north side of the creek after dark. There was a back fire burning along the south side of the creek. After much walking amid considerable grumbling by Frank Tilton, they arrived at a bend in the creek, from where they traveled south along the west side. There was an incessant lighting of fire-bugs, bull frogs were bellowing near the water's edge, while the little frogs kept up a chorus of croaking. Now and then one could hear the scream of a screech owl or the hoot of a big barred owl, while ever and anon a coyote's distant wail penetrated the air. Presently heavy clouds obscured the stars from view, and increased the darkness of the night.

"It's as dark as a stack of black cats," said Frank as he stumbled over a little mound of earth in the center of which was a hole; the den of a prairie or den owl.

Soon could be heard the low rumbling of distant thunder, and flashes of lightning occasionally lit up a portion of the moving clouds. "Sounds like potatoes rolling out of a wagon into a cellar," remarked Frank irreverently, as a louder rumbling of thunder shook the atmosphere. Still the other members of the party trudged along in silence; Mr. Brandon worried over the children, hoping that they would not be caught out in the storm, for he well knew that the increasing loudness of the thunder and the vividness of the lightning portended a severe storm; Ike Morrow thought of the children too, but just now he was more intent on reaching a place that would shelter them from

the approaching storm. "It's going to be a fierce storm," he muttered under his breath. Long Charlie's energies were occupied mainly in endeavoring to keep his eyes open.

"I never can keep awake after nine o'clock," he thought, as he sleepily followed the dark form of Ike, who was increasing the rapidity of his strides, as he made for a heavy woods near the creek.

"We had better stay here for a while," said Ike, seating himself on an old log, "these big trees will give us some shelter from the storm."

"Well, I'm going to sleep till the storm comes anyway," drawled Long Charlie as he stretched himself full-length on the grass under a big walnut tree. Soon a warning flash of lightning lit up the dark woods and the still water in the nearby pond, followed by a threatening peal of thunder which seemed to shake the very atmosphere in which they breathed.

"Better lie under some other tree, Long Charlie," warned Ike hurriedly, "walnut trees draw lightning more than any other kind of a tree."

Long Charlie immediately changed his sleeping place to the leaf-mold covered ground under a huge spreading elm, and soon was lost in sleep, snoring repeatedly as though keeping time in a chorus with the ever increasing peals of thunder.

"Don't think I care to sleep anyhow," said Frank looking at his uncle, then uneasily at the approaching storm.

Presently big drops of rain could be heard on the thick foliage above, while now and then one struck one of the men sitting on the log. One big drop struck Long Charlie in the mouth just as he was giving vent to an uncommonly large pent-up snore. He sat up with a start, blinking his eyes, and wondering what had happened. He sprang to his

feet as a terrific crash of thunder came down from the heavy clouds above, followed almost instantly by another bolt of electricity which struck the walnut tree under which Long Charlie had been resting, tearing off one of the large branches which came crashing to the ground. The three men on the log were almost stunned with the nearness of the shock. Then down came the rain in torrents, while vivid flashes of lightning lighted up woods and water fully half of the time, and the thunder-claps were almost deafening. The men stood huddled together through it all, saying not a word. At last the storm seemed to slacken its fury. "What's that rushing sound north of us?" anxiously inquired Mr. Brandon. He had scarcely uttered the words, before he was conscious of the fact that he was standing in water nearly up to his knees. "Run for the prairie, boys," yelled Ike, "there's been a cloudburst at the head of the creek, and the valley will soon be covered with water."

Away ran the men, splashing through the rushing tide of water that was sweeping down the creek valley. Frank stumbled and as he fell he began to call out the word "help," but before the word was entirely out of his mouth, a gurgling sound was heard as his head went under the water, and the men heard only the sound of the first three letters of the word, which caused them to stop and look back, for Frank with all of his slangy expressions was never known to really swear. He was soon put on his feet, while his uncle said in a low voice, "Frank, boy, don't swear."

"I didn't swear," indignantly retorted Frank, "I tried to say 'help,' and the water knocked the last letter off of the word; it wasn't me, it was the water."

Before the men regained the stony bluff where the upland prairie met the creek valley or bottom-land, the water had risen above their waists, and in one low place, the water actually came up to their chins, in fact Frank, who was shorter than the others, had much difficulty in keeping his nose above water.

The bedraggled men, their clothes becoming weighty with the soakage of water, trudged southward, and when the gladdening dawn spread over the land, they found themselves on a bluff across the creek from Brandon's house. The valley was still flooded.

"How are we to get across?" said Frank as he sat down on the edge of a lime stone that projected from the side of the bluff.

"There is a rattler around, I hear his warning rattle," said Ike, "he's somewhere near you, Frank, look out!" added the cow-boy warningly. Frank sprang to his feet and took a stride or two to one side, just as Ike yelled out, "Don't go that way, Frank." The warning was too late. The big rattlesnake that lay coiled up near Frank, with his head in the air and his black tongue darting in and out of his ugly mouth, while the twelve rattlers or buttons on the end of his tail kept up an incessant rattling noise, quickly darted at Frank's hand, uncoiling as it did so, as the young man took a step or two nearer. Frank felt a sharp pang in the end of his fore-finger, and ran to one side. Mr. Brandon and Long Charlie succeeded in killing the snake with stones, while Ike examined the bite on Frank's finger. Ike placed the injured finger in his mouth and sucked as much blood from the wound as he could, carefully spitting the poisonous blood from his mouth. "I should think you would be afraid to do that," said Frank in astonishment.

"I would if I had any partly decayed teeth," said Ike, "but my teeth are all perfectly sound, and so long as I do not swallow any of the poison, it will do me no harm."

Then the generous hearted cow-boy tied a stout cord,—part of a fishing line—around Frank's wrist, and another around his forearm. The injured hand was soon swollen as far as the cord around the wrist, and before long the cord cut into the flesh so badly that it had to be cut, and the poisonous blood allowed to circulate as far as the cord around the arm.

"Got any liquor in the house, Mr. Brandon?" asked Ike.

"Yes," replied Mr. Brandon. Every settler in those days kept liquor of some kind in the house to be used for rattlesnake bite.

"We'd better get over to the house right away then," said Ike, beginning to take off his coat.

"I've been wondering how to get across the creek; guess we will have to swim, but how are we going to breast the swift current in the middle of the stream?" said Mr. Brandon, taking off his coat and vest.

"There is one place where the creek is quite narrow," said Ike, "the banks being so close to each other that the branches of the trees come together over the stream. We can swim to those trees, climb them and swing from one limb to another."

Accordingly each man divested himself of clothing, rolling them in a bundle to be tied on top of his head. Then into the water they plunged, for they could all swim, and swam to the narrow channel indicated by Ike; here they climbed trees and swung across the current to other trees, then swam and waded to the bluff on the east side of the creek. Here they clothed themselves again and started for the Brandon house.

CHAPTER V.

FOUND.

Mr. Carlton on reaching his house, after Mr. Brandon and Ike Morrow had left the Brandon house to trail the Indians, rode to the rolling prairie south of the East-branch to where his son Walter was herding sheep. "Come, Walter," commanded the father rather sternly, "let's corral the sheep; Georgie and Carrie are lost, and we've got to hunt them."

In a short time with the aid of the sheep-dog, the fifteen hundred Mexican sheep were driven into the corral.

"Light the lantern," commanded Mr. Carlton, "we may not be back for a coon's age."

The son obeyed and hung the lantern back on the gate post. It was customary, in these regions, for sheepmen to keep a lighted lantern hung on a post of the sheep corral all night as a preventive against the slaughtering of sheep by wolves and coyotes.

"I think we had best go on foot, Walter," said Mr. Carlton, "for more than likely the children, if they are lost and not with the Indians, are somewhere in the woods along the creek."

The father, son, and the tan-colored sheep-dog followed the East-branch to the junction of the two branches, thence northward along the West-branch. As they passed through a patch of wild gooseberry bushes, which were of a very large size, Walter nearly stumbled over Pete, the ex-slave and ex-soldier.

"Why, here is Pete," exclaimed the boy in surprise. "Pete, what are you lying here for?"

"Ah! my young massa, if you done had a lot of Injuns after youse, I reckon you'd be hidin' under a goothberry

bush too," said Pete, rising to his feet and rolling his big eyes in all directions to see if there were any signs of Indians.

"Did you see Georgie and Carrie, Pete?" asked Mr. Carlton anxiously.

"Yessah, I'se did, dey was gwine cross de field towards youse house 'fore dem big Injuns come along; I'se reckon deys done been cotched by de Injuns long 'fore dis," answered the colored man excitedly.

The three searched every dark corner of the woods, walked to the stony bluffs overlooking the creek valley from time to time, to look across the rolling prairie; but no sign of the lost children. Finally they arrived at the pond where Georgie had been fishing. Grave apprehensions were felt when Walter found the pole, line, and hook which the little boy had used in fishing, lying on the grassy bank of the pond; and Lew Carlton's heart almost stood still and a lump seemed to swell up in his throat when he espied Georgie's and Carrie's straw hats afloat in the middle of the pond. The stern, iron-nerved man, made so by troubles of the past, and by a reckless, daring life of pioneering, was unnerved and his eyes were dimmed by misty tears as he thought of the probable meaning of those two hats resting motionless on the surface of the water. "My God!" he said half aloud, "my little daughter, the only child that resembled the mother, lying at the bottom of this pond!"

"What will we do?" sobbed Walter.

"Strip off and wade the pond, Walter, you and I. Where it is too deep to wade, dive, and search for their bodies," said Mr. Carlton; then addressing Pete he continued, as he began fairly ripping the buttons from his vest as he

hurriedly undressed, "You go on a dead run to Brandon's, his house is nearer than mine, and get an ax."

"Lordy! Massa Cawltan, I'se feared de Injuns will done git me 'fo' I kin git half way dere."

"You go, Walter, and let that cowardly nigger stay here," replied Carlton excitedly. "Strip off, Pete, and help me find the children," commanded Carlton, as he waded through the deep water, then swam, diving now here, now there, but always without finding any other trace of the lost bodies. Pete obeyed and did likewise with no better results. At last Walter returned panting from his running, carrying two axes. In a short time a raft was constructed and a sort of dredge made, and the pond was dredged from end to end, from bank to bank, but of no avail. The dredgers were about to relinquish their dredging, feeling sure that no human bodies were at the bottom of the pond, when amid an entanglement of roots, moss, and blue flag, was found a semicircular comb belonging to Carrie. Mr. Carlton, whose fears had left, hoping that the children were still alive, almost sank to his knees on the raft, and the cold perspiration stood out on his forehead, at the dread probability of the children still lying lifeless at the bottom of the pond. The dredging was renewed with much vigor, but amid the sinking of the hearts of all three men. After a most thorough dredging no more signs of the children were discovered. Then an attempt was made to track the children, for footprints of their shoes could be seen in the clay at the water's edge. But no other footprints could be found.

"It is very strange indeed," thought Mr. Carlton, "that no footprints can be found except those at the edge of the water and those leading to the pond, and yet no bodies can be found in the pond."

"Well, we will search farther up the creek," he said to his companions. They traveled, as before, until dusk, when just as they entered a dark patch of woods, some animal gave an unearthly screech, almost at the very feet of Pete, and ran scurrying through the underbrush.

"Lawd, sabe us!" yelled Pete as he sprang into the air, tripped his foot on an ivy vine and went sprawling on his hands and knees on the leaf mold. "De Injuns am comin' shuah 'nough," continued Pete, as he scrambled to his feet and began to retreat to the rear on the double quick.

"Hold on there, you runaway nigger," called Mr. Carlton, "that was only a wild cat, come back here."

It was some little time before it became clear to Pete's hallucinated mind that it was only a catamount rudely awakened from dreams of fat prairie chicken and tender quail by the toe of a black man's shoe. After Pete had regained his courage, they proceeded farther into the woods.

* * * * *

After Georgie Brandon had tired of his unsuccessful fishing, having caught nothing but a hideous looking crayfish, he too fell asleep, but was aroused by Carrie's restlessness, she having regained her wakefulness.

"Let's go round to the other bank and see the owl better," suggested the little girl rising to her feet.

"All right, Carrie," responded the boy, gallantly leading the way. But instead of going round the end of the pond, they took off their shoes and stockings and waded across a shallow part of the pond. As they reached the opposite bank, a rustling breeze took their hats sailing into the air. Two little hands were involuntarily thrust upwards, but by this time the hats had alighted on the water of the

pond. As Carrie's hand went up to grab at her hat, she accidentally struck her comb with such force as to send it whirling into the water also. "Oh! my hand!" half whimpered Carrie, "I hurt it on that nasty comb."

"Our hats and the comb are in the water and we can't get them now," said Georgie, after studying the situation a minute.

"This breeze feels nice on my head," said Carrie, as the golden strands of hair blew about her face, "and I don't care if the comb is in the water, it hurt my hand."

The owl not liking such noisy little companions, flew to an oak across the pond, and sat blinking wisely, as though to say, "You may look at me, but don't become too familiar, nor make too much noise. I want quietness that I may wisely think out the conundrums of bird life."

"Have you ever been to that high bluff over there, Georgie?" inquired Carrie suggestively.

"No," replied the boy, "but we will go there right this minute." They went to the high bluff, though it took a good many minutes in which to get there.

"Look what I've found," said the boy, picking up an Indian dart of flint.

"What is it? Oh! I see, a flint stone. But who made it that shape?" asked Carrie.

"The Indians made it that way for their bow and arrows, to shoot buffalo," said the boy enthusiastically; then wishing to corroborate his statement, he added, "Cow-boy Ike says there used to be lots of buffalos here, and the Indians used bow and arrows instead of guns; they made the arrow heads of flint stones, and called them darts."

"Oh! look at that big wolf," exclaimed the girl excitedly, "it's no coyote, it's a big gray timber wolf; wonder if he will bite?"

"N—o," drawled the boy; then as he picked up a stone and threw it at the wolf, he said somewhat boastfully, "I ain't afraid of a wolf, nor a wild cat either, I ain't afraid of anything."

The wolf slowly trotted away as the stone flew wide of its mark, but soon stopped, turned around, looked, then came back a few steps, sat down, and watched the movements of the children.

Georgie, after picking up another stone, watched the fearless wolf a moment, then letting the stone fall from his hand, said, "Guess we'd better go to that other big woods over at the creek. 'Taint worth while bothering with the wolf anyway," said the boy as he and the girl descended the bluff hand in hand, and proceeded to recross the bottom-land to the creek. Arriving at the creek, the children wandered farther than they had intended and became conscious of the fact that they were too tired to return home without a rest; accordingly they sat on the ground side by side with their backs against the trunk of a large elm.

"I wish I was home, I'm afraid it will be night before we get home, then we will get lost," whimpered Carrie.

"Never mind, Carrie dear," said Georgie soothingly as he put one arm around her and drew her head to his shoulder, then as a beautiful cardinal or red-bird alighted on a nearby limb and began to sing, he added, "See, Carrie, the red-bird is singing to cheer us up."

The little girl lay listening to the "Cheo-cheo-cheo-cheo" of the gorgeously plumed bird, evincing in the jerk of his proudly crested head a self-conscious superiority over a more democratic robin on the ground beneath him.

Dusk had cast its dark mantle over the land, causing the woods to become darker still. Both children had fallen asleep, when Mr. Carlton, Walter, and Pete came hurriedly

crashing through the underbrush, and soon the lost children were taken home.

When Mr. Brandon and Ike Morrow and the Tiltons arrived at the Brandon house, they were overjoyed to find Georgie there, and to learn that Carrie was safe in her home at the Carltons.

Frank Tilton received immediate medical treatment for his snake bite in the form of whisky and alcohol poured down his throat until he lay on the lounge so drunk that he actually wore the skin off his knuckles pounding the wall with his fists, and declaring that he would bury all of the rattlesnakes and whisky in the bowels of the earth. It was necessary that he become intoxicated in order that the poison of the alcohol might counteract the poison of the snake. Frank had never been drunk before and declared afterward that he hoped it would never become necessary for him to drink liquor again. In this Ike extended his sympathy in a well-directed temperance lecture, despite the fact that he detested Frank's extravagant use of slang, and that he was his rival for the heart and hand of Miss Mary Carlton.

Pete declared that he had "had 'nough of dis heah place full ob tousands ob no-a-count Injuns ready to scalp you alive and take a hard workin' niggah's money from him; and dere is no place like ole Virginie, and dat is de place I'se bound fo' soon as dis heah niggah can git away."

CHAPTER VI.

MUTUAL.

In the west the sky was aglow with the sunset's pink hue, a few lingering clouds near the horizon took on a blacker aspect in contrast with the reflection of the sun's rays; but these dark clouds were also made beautiful by the silver and gold tint linings caused by the sunlight. A few night-hawks had begun to fly about high up in the air, their chirp, chirp, chirp occasionally being interrupted by their bellowing noise as they heralded the approach of dusk.

"Drive them up, Shep," urged a twelve-year-old boy on a bald-faced bay Indian pony. The black sheep-dog began pacing back and forth, now and then giving a sharp bark to some lagging sheep. The whole seventeen hundred sheep were soon in motion toward the corral, and later were safely corralled for the night.

"Come, Ballie," said the boy as he lightly tapped the pony with his hand, "we must hurry, Carrie will come for the mail this evening." The pony seeming to comprehend the meaning of its master, galloped over the rolling prairie to a stony bluff overlooking a beautiful valley down which coursed, in winding curves, a creek lined by trees, with here and there, in a bend of the creek, a heavy woods. On the bluff among other buildings stood a large store building, containing a country general store and a post-office. As the boy rode up one side of the bluff, from the other side came a golden-haired girl with pretty blue eyes and a graceful form. Her fair face was all aglow with excitement as her pony galloped up the hill. The girl and the boy met on top of the hill. "Don't get off, Carrie," said the boy, "I'll go

in and get your mail and ride back with you as far as the East-branch."

"Thank you, Georgie," replied the girl gratefully as the boy slid from his pony and ran into the store, behind a counter, and sorted over the mail from C box; then with two letters and a paper in his hand he hurriedly returned to the girl waiting outside on her pony.

"Two letters and a paper, Carrie," said the boy in high spirits, handing the mail to her as he alighted on his patient little pony.

"Both for Sister Mary," said Carrie scanning the address, then the post-marks of the letters. "Oh, I know who they are from; one is from Ike Morrow, and the other is from Frank Tilton."

"Where are Ike and Frank now?" inquired Georgie, becoming interested, as the two ponies galloped side by side toward the West-branch crossing.

"Ike is conductor of a freight train in Texas, and Frank is teaching in a high school in western Missouri," willingly informed the girl. "Both of them have proposed to Mary, requesting her to wait till they obtain better positions," she added, becoming still more confidential. Ike thinks he can work up to an official of the road, and Frank declares that he will eventually become a professor. I am inclined to think she will accept Ike, though she likes them both, for both worked hard to help make Kansas a prohibition state; and you know Mary is so interested in temperance that anybody who believes in prohibition is all right in her eyes."

And so the two young persons talked in confidence to each other as their ponies dropped from a gallop to a trot, then to a walk.

"What are you going to make of yourself, Carrie?" asked Georgie with much interest.

"Oh, I don't know, I like grammar, and geography, and history, and I think I'd like to teach the dead languages in a college," replied Carrie after a moment's thought.

"What are you going to be, Georgie?" she asked, smoothing back a few stray golden locks that the wind was gaily tossing about her forehead.

"Well," said Georgie, his brown eyes lighting up with a pleased expression, "I think I'll be a naturalist."

"And study birds and animals, oh! that will be fine," exclaimed Carrie with delight. "We will go together over the prairie, across fields, and through the woods, finding out about the habits of birds and animals, and you can tell me all about their ways, because you can understand them better than I can; and I'll tell you their Latin names. Oh! won't that be fine, Georgie?"

"Yes, Carrie," said Georgie looking admiringly at her, "and we can go through life together that way, and be a help to each other; we have always been together and we always will be, won't we, Carrie?"

"Of course," responded Carrie.

Georgie Brandon and Carrie Carlton seemed to be endowed with intelligence and understanding far beyond their years. They acted and conversed more like a young man and woman than a boy and girl of about twelve years of age.

The country had rapidly filled with settlers. Mr. Brandon had become a man of considerable means; acquired much land, a sheep ranch, started a general store, a sorghum mill, and was the postmaster at the little country village of Brandonville, dealt in real estate, and had

been elected a justice of the peace. Mr. Carlton had enlarged his own sheep ranch, purchased more land, and was considered one of the leading men of the neighborhood. Charlie Tilton had also become the possessor of hundreds of cattle, and had a large farm. These three pioneers had, after a hard fight, succeeded in organizing a school district, and helped very materially in the general welfare of the neighborhood. They had fought hand in hand for the prohibition of the liquor traffic in the state; had adopted a system of encouraging new settlers to move in; had been the means of establishing a church, Sunday-school, literary society, etc. The neighborhood owed much of its prosperity to the energy and self-sacrifice of these pioneers. Thus had the wild, untamed country given way to the inevitable march of civilization.

As Georgie and Carrie reached the East-branch crossing, the ponies came to a halt, as though accustomed to stopping at this particular trysting place.

After long and low conversations with occasional youthful laughter, the boy returned to the village and the girl continued her journey home.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CRISIS.

Three years had elapsed since Georgie and Carrie had said to each other, while riding from Brandonville to the East-branch crossing, that they would go through life together. If they had been at the age of maturity, they would have considered this as an engagement, but as it was, it was only the expression in words of what they had always believed and what their parents intended that they should believe.

These last three years had been years of drouth; three dry years in succession was pretty hard on the poor settlers. Mr. Brandon had given his customers credit during these years, and had been obliged to borrow money and mortgage most of his property in order to keep his customers supplied with provisions. Each year he had said, encouragingly, hopefully, "Next year we will have good crops and then our finances may be gradually straightened out." But he had not counted on three of such years.

He had borrowed most of his money of John Elton, the big cattleman, and Louis Boucher, the leading banker. If these two men were willing to wait another year, he felt certain that he could pull through, for surely the fourth year would prove to be a good one, since it usually happened that after a series of poor years came a year of bumper crops. Then the farmers could pay at least part of their debts. Mr. Brandon finally mortgaged every bit of property he possessed, besides calling on each of his debtors in his endeavor to get every cent of money he possibly could. But what he succeeded in getting was very small compared to the amount he was obliged to pay out in a few days, for most of his debts were soon to fall due.

He rode to the county seat and held an interview with Mr. Boucher, the banker. That smooth tongued, portly gentleman appeared to sympathize with Mr. Brandon deeply, tried to say soothing words, promised to do all he could; why shouldn't he, being a prominent church member, president of the bank, and known as a very public spirited man, yet somehow getting richer every day. After much talking and some "beating about the bush," Mr. Boucher patted Mr. Brandon on the back and ended by saying, "See what John Elton says, Mr. Brandon; if he is willing to wait, the bank will wait."

This to Mr. Brandon was not a very satisfactory termination of his interview with the banker. "See what John Elton says, eh," said Brandon as he walked down the big stone steps of the bank building. "Well, I'll see, but I don't trust Elton much in a case like this, I've seen him close on many a poor fellow, I wouldn't have borrowed the money of him if I could have got it elsewhere, but I felt certain the third year would be a wet one, and I thought I was fairly safe in borrowing from him."

It was night before Mr. Brandon arrived home. As he entered the house, Mrs. Brandon, who was in a rocker knitting while she awaited her husband's home coming, looked up. She saw at once by the expression of her husband's face that the crisis had come. She was not surprised then when he said, "Mary, it's all over. Boucher said he was willing to wait if Elton was, but Elton flatly refused to wait, even boisterously threatening to foreclose. If he does, of course Boucher will do the same, and we will be financially ruined."

"Oh, well, Henry," said Mrs. Brandon with a brave attempt at cheerfulness, "let them take everything if they must, we will begin over again, and after a few good years our debtors will pay us and we will try it again, only

perhaps, we had best go a little slower next time and not run such risk."

After a sleepless night Mr. Brandon arose with a severe headache. Mrs. Brandon too, despite her attempt at cheerfulness, did not sleep well and wore a tired, haggard look the next day.

John Elton kept his word and together with Mr. Boucher foreclosed on Mr. Brandon. Everything went; farm, ranch, store, sorghum mill, horses, mules, cattle, sheep, hogs, farm implements, only the household goods were left. Georgie could not keep back the tears as he watched his father's creditors take away his favorite pony. The loss was too great for Mr. Brandon, who lay for days weak and emaciated, unable to eat or sleep; it was even feared that his mind would not endure the shock, but at last there seemed to come a reaction, and he regained his health. He seemed to take fresh courage, determined on regaining what he had lost. He procured a position in the bank, the very bank of which Boucher was president. This portly gentleman, after commanding his share of the Brandon property, offered to take pity on his debtor, and spoke many smooth words of encouragement, slapped his short fleshy hand on Brandon's shoulder, telling him of how much the bank was in need of just such a man as he, and promising promotion at the earliest date possible. Mr. Brandon knowing the emptiness of Boucher's flattery, paid little heed to the wonderful prospects opened up before him, as told by Boucher, but needing money with which to keep himself and family went to work with a will.

Georgie's prospects for attending college in the near future were shattered. He was obliged to hire out as a farm hand. His first piece of work was following a harrow all day long. At night he came to his supper tired and covered with dust and perspiration. His mind was even

in a worse state, for the work seemed too monotonous to him, and he longed for the pony, dog, sheep, and the prairie. In fact he soon threw up his job and hired out to the old German sheep rancher in the Flint Hills as a shepherd.

All might have gone well but for the fact that the Brandon property taken by Elton amounted to more than enough to pay the debt Brandon had owed him. Mr. Brandon had figured this out, which fact had been made known to Mr. Boucher in some mysterious way, who quietly informed Elton. Now Elton believed that it was necessary to get Brandon out of the country in order to make himself safe. Mr. Brandon had, in his endeavors to avert a financial crisis, given so many lien notes and mortgages that his financial accounts were in a rather mixed condition. Elton took advantage of this and had Brandon arrested for embezzlement. And so it happened that Brandon was lodged in the county jail to await his trial. Mrs. Brandon now for the first time gave way to her emotions, this last trouble was too much for the brave woman, and she was down with nervous prostration.

Georgie understanding the situation kept up a cheerful demeanor, tried to comfort his mother, also visited his father in the jail as often as possible. It was a sad picture; the tall, dark eyed, mild looking man sitting on a cot in the jail room, one hand holding a bible, the other resting on the shoulder of his son, who sat beside him. In the same room sat a circle of men, most of them with hardened faces, men of evil habits, playing cards, while now and then an oath escaped the mouth of one or the other, as a card was laid down that indicated a loser in the game.

Georgie had left the sheep ranch when his father was arrested, and with his mother moved to town in order to be near his father.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARTED.

When the news of Brandon's arrest had spread round about, which it did very quickly, people began to take sides; some openly declared that Mr. Brandon was innocent, others were undecided, while still others being somewhat under the influence of John Elton, and perhaps in debt to him, were afraid to side against him, therefore took sides with Elton, not so much because they actually believed Brandon guilty, but because they were afraid of Elton.

Mr. Cowden had become postmaster at Brandonville, and his son Lawrence, who was about the age of Georgie Brandon, and who had unsuccessfully tried to be Georgie's rival in his attentions to Carrie Carlton, now declared to Georgie that he believed in Mr. Brandon's innocence, and endeavored in various ways to extend his sympathy to Georgie in his troubles.

"I'm afraid, Georgie," said Lawrence, putting his arm on the former's shoulder in a friendly manner, "that the Carlton's have taken sides with Elton. I am awfully sorry, Georgie, a man like Carlton, who has known your father for so long ought to know better."

Georgie made no reply, but sprang on the herd pony and rode for the Flint Hills to join the herd of sheep he had left on the divide. He had ridden to see his mother that morning, leaving the sheep with the dog. This was just a few days prior to the time when he and his mother moved to town. Georgie had intended riding by the Carlton home on his way back to the sheep, but if the Carlton's were against his father, could it be that Carrie would not care for him? Of course his father was not guilty, he felt

sure of that, but still many thought it a disgrace for a man to be arrested and put in jail. Did Carrie think his father was in disgrace? Did she feel diffident about associating with a boy whose father was supposed to be in disgrace? Must he lose Carrie too? This was more than the youth could bear; those long years of close friendship with the golden-haired girl had had its effect. Wealth was gone, his father in jail, his mother dependent on himself for a living, his prospects of attending college gone, and now was he to lose the girl he had always supposed would be his life companion? Georgie Brandon was young, perhaps too young to be really in love, but his intellect was far in advance of his years, and circumstances had been such that he thought more of Carrie Carlton than most boys of his age could possibly think of a girl. Could he see Carrie in the face of these circumstances? No, he had better not, for no doubt Mr. Carlton would not wish his daughter to associate with a boy whose father was in jail, especially since Carlton, according to Lawrence Cowden's statement, believed that father guilty. So Georgie rode on with a heavy heart, only by a brave effort of his will power keeping back the tears.

At last the trial came off and the jury gave a verdict of not guilty, amid a storm of abusive language from John Elton, who had declared that in a law court he was never beaten before nor would he be beaten this time. However, Elton's ardor was wonderfully cooled when informed by Brandon's lawyers that he had laid himself liable to the law by taking more of the Brandon property than belonged to him. These same lawyers urged Mr. Brandon to have Elton arrested, but the mild, dark eyed man said, "No, let him go. I don't want to cause Elton any trouble so long

as he lets me alone." And Elton very prudently promised to let him alone.

Mr. Brandon resumed his work in the bank, and he and Mrs. Brandon resided in town.

George rode with the Brandonville mail carrier on his way to Chelsea, Brandonville, and Sycamore Springs. The stone fenced farms in the Walnut valley, the woods of oak, elm, ash, hickory, and walnut, along the river banks, the steep, stony bluffs bordering the valley, the old stone fort, the confluence of the creeks with the river, the pretty little village of Chelsea surrounded by rich farm lands, the large peach orchards near the farm homes, all of this scenery never appealed to Georgie's sense of beauty so much as during this ride with the mail carrier, who had been a soldier in the Civil War, and entertained his youthful companion with many a tale of hairbreadth escape. But it was the thought that he would soon see Carrie that caused Georgie to enjoy this ride so much. He was going to see Carrie; to tell her that his father was acquitted by the jury, that in the eyes of the people he, Georgie Brandon, was the son of an honorable father.

At Brandonville Georgie sprang out of the old mail cart, and walked briskly to the post-office. He met Lawrence Cowden.

"I am glad to see you; and glad your father got free," said the post-master's son, extending a hand to Georgie.

"Any mail for Carlton's?" asked Georgie, adding, "I'm going over that way and thought I'd take their mail along."

"Carlton's!" said Lawrence in surprise. "Why Georgie haven't you heard?"

"Heard what?" asked Georgie in dismay, for he knew something was amiss.

"Why," began Lawrence, "Carlton sold out and moved back to New York, so Carrie could attend a preparatory school. You know she wants to go to college some day.

"Do you know her address, Lawrence?"

"No, I'm sorry I do not," replied Lawrence.

Georgie turned away with a heavy heart. He walked down the steep bluff, passed the blacksmith shop, the old sorghum mill, crossed the creek, across the valley to the East-branch, followed this winding stream to its source above the old Tilton cattle ranch, and struck across the divide; darkness settled over the prairie, but he kept on in the direction of the Flint Hills. Wolves and coyotes howled around him; he heeded them not, he was walking, walking, walking, while he thought of his golden-haired Carrie hundreds, yes more than a thousand miles away. Was she thinking of him? Why had she not left him a letter or a note of explanation and bidding him farewell? She could at least have left him her address. Surely she had ceased to care for him. He threw back his head and walked faster, as he thought, "If she cares not for me, then I care not for her." But before he had crossed the divide he had forgot about this last resolve, and his imagination was alive picturing Carrie as walking down Broadway or strolling along Fifth Avenue, or perhaps crossing the Brooklyn Bridge; then he could see her at the sea side, watching the rolling waves as the sea breeze blew strands of golden hair about her pretty face; he saw her sitting at her desk at school studying her Latin; after all of these imaginary scenes passing through his mind and his heart gladdening at each new picture, then to say he cared not for his golden-haired Carrie? No, no, he could never truthfully say that, of course he cared for her, and with all of his heart too.

By the time he reached the Flint Hills hope had taken the place of despondency. He wended his way among the dark outlines of the hills to Wilhelm Wallenstein's ranch, and though it was nearly morning, he went to bed and slept, and dreamed of those imaginary scenes of Carrie all over again.

Two days after his arrival at the German's ranch, when he had corralled the sheep for the night and entered the stone house for his supper he was greeted by the old German with, "I vent to de post-offeece today und I got von pig letter for you Georgie." Whereupon the German handed the young shepherd a letter, the post-marks on it indicated that it had been posted at Brandonville, and sent to the county seat, where it was re-mailed to the little post-office in the Flint Hills. Georgie recognizing the handwriting as Carrie's, quickly tore open the envelope and drew out the letter and began to read:

Brandonville, Kans., Oct. 12, 18—.

Mr. George Brandon,

E———, Kans.

Dear Georgie:—

I am so glad that your father was found not guilty by the jury. Of course I never believed he was guilty nor did father.

I have wanted to see you for so long. I could not keep track of you; sometimes you were in the Flint Hills and sometimes in town. I hoped you would come out to see me, but you did not; perhaps you intended to come as soon as your father was released.

Father sold out and we are going to New York in order that I may attend a preparatory school, and still be at home with father and sister and brother. I do hope I

will see you before we take the train. We are going to take the prairie road to E——. I thought we might meet you on that road, if you happened to come out on that day. You know you always take that road when you ride the pony.

We will call on your father and mother while waiting for the train at E——. I do wish you could go to school too, Georgie. Maybe you can some of these days. But remember, Georgie, I will always remain true to you. When we arrive at New York I will write to you and give you my address.

Yours as ever,

Carrie Carlton.

Georgie read this letter three times, then kissed it and placed it in his little portable writing desk.

"She didn't know I might come with the mail carrier along the river road. That is how I missed her. While I was coming up the river road, she was going down the prairie road," thought Georgie as he sat down to think it all over again.

It was with a glad heart that he followed the flock of sheep over the hills the next day. Two weeks he herded the sheep among the hills, waiting for that letter from Carrie in which would give him her address, he could scarcely wait to send his letter, for he had written a long letter which he intended mailing as soon as he received her address. But no letter from his golden-haired Carrie came, not after he had waited two months, four months, six months, a whole year. Why had she not written? Had she found another whom she liked better than him. That was quite probable, for he was well aware that she would become more sophisticated during her stay in the metropolis and no doubt the young men of the city showed to

much better advantage than an unsophisticated youth of the Western prairie. Still in his heart he could hardly reconcile such thoughts. Carrie had seemed so pure, so true, so unchangeable, that something else must have happened.

Two years went by and no letter from Carrie Carlton. Georgie had grown to manhood. He still cared for the Carrie of the younger days. He became melancholy. He appeared always to be thinking, seldom talked, never attended the socials, parties, and entertainments most young people so much enjoyed. He hardly looked at a girl, only the image of Carrie was before his eyes. He read much and studied some, attended lectures when he could, and took an active part in a local literary society.

Carrie Carlton had written to Georgie Brandon on her arrival in New York, but Mr. Brandon having moved to Brandonville and started up in business on a small scale, the postmaster at E—— forwarded the letter to Brandonville. Here Lawrence Cowden opened the letter, read it, then burned it. Three or four letters the girl had written to her Georgie, and each letter met the same fate. Then Lawrence wrote, as he thought, a very nice letter to Carrie Carlton, stating in a matter of fact way, that Georgie Brandon was keeping company with his sister, Miss Rose Cowden. Lawrence, however, never received an answer to his letter. But Carrie evidently believed something was amiss with Georgie and finally stopped writing letters to him. And thus were parted the two young persons who had vowed that they would never be parted.

CHAPTER IX.

ROSE COWDEN.

Years passed by and still George Brandon—he was no longer called “Georgie,” for he was now a man—refused to mingle in society. To be sure he attended church and Sabbath school rather irregularly, was an active member of the local literary society still, but girls seemed to have no fascination for him, though he did on one or two occasions accompany Rose Cowden home from the literary society, but he did that more from pity than for any other cause, since she seemed to have been left alone. Other young men did not care for Rose. The poor girl had the misfortune to be the owner of two cross eyes, that when looking at one appeared to be gazing to one side. Otherwise Rose was not so bad looking; deep blue eyes that would have been pretty if they had formed the habit of looking straight, black hair, and fair regular features, with rather a pretty mouth. Rose, like so many girls afflicted with a deformity, possessed more intellect than ordinary girls; and was especially interested in literature. George had to admit to himself that he admired Rose’s sensible ways, and on several occasions spent a Sunday afternoon at the Cowden’s for the express purpose of conversing with her on various topics of interest to them both. But it was far from his intentions to give Rose a place in his heart, Carrie still held sway there.

George Brandon had given part of his wages to his father in order that the latter might pay off a few scattering debts and still have money enough to run his business. Now that Henry Brandon had got his little country store well stocked, George began saving his wages for his own use. And when his bank account showed a neat little

sum of money to his credit, he made up his mind to attend school. He wanted to prepare for college, and chose an academy on Long Island, east of New York. John Brandon, brother of Henry Brandon, an Illinois farmer, had met and made friends with the president of the Academy board of trustees, while taking his first sea-side vacation at Atlantic City. George's Uncle John on hearing of his nephew's intention of attending a preparatory school, recommended this Long Island academy, and forthwith wrote to the president in regard to his nephew's intentions. George was well aware that in years he was far beyond the age at which most students attend a preparatory school, in fact many a young man had graduated from college younger by several years than was George Brandon the year he prepared for entrance to the Academy. He knew that probably the Academy students would think him backward in his studies for one of his age, but that made little difference to him, he wanted to learn, and he expected to learn, whether his fellow students considered him too old for an Academy student or not.

When George had packed all of his belongings, he wished to take with him, he decided that he had better walk over to the Cowden's and bid Rose good-bye. "Rose is so interested in school work, I know she will want to know all about it. Poor girl, it is too bad she can't go to some such school too. She would make a fine teacher, a specialist in literature. Why she's already read most of the works of the standard American authors, and many of the English authors. She has even made herself acquainted with Schiller and Goethe and Hugo. I wish I knew as much about literature and the standard authors as she does. Really I like the girl. I know she will be interested in my school work; guess I'll ask her to write. Mr. Cowden don't believe much in the education of girls, he

thinks the kitchen and sewing room the only place for them. So poor Rose must remain at home and keep house; too bad the mother died when the girl was so young." These were the thoughts that ran through George's mind as he walked to the Cowden residence back of the postoffice at Brandonville.

Knocking at the front door, he was received by Rose. Her countenance was perceptibly brightened at sight of George's tall form standing before her.

"Come in George, I am glad to see you, I have been wishing you would come, I want to read to you a portion of an English translation of *Les Miserables*, I want to see what you think of it."

"Thank you Rose, I shall be glad to listen to Hugo's masterpiece, but I have something to tell you that may be of interest to you."

"Oh! have you? Please be seated and tell me all about it, and I'll read *Les Miserables* afterward."

There was an expectancy in her tone of voice and in her look as she said this, that caused her to look uncommonly bewitching despite the fact that her eyes appeared to be looking at the window, when in reality they were looking straight at George, who was sitting near the door.

The tall young man leaned back in his chair, and his brown eyes searched the pretty features of Rose Cowden. He failed to notice the defect of the eyes, he noticed only that they were a deep blue, there seemed to be a depth of meaning in those eyes which as yet he was unable to fathom.

"She'll make some one a good wife," he thought, "she's too good a girl for most of the young chaps around here. Really she ought to marry some one with a better education and better training than most of these rough and ready Westerners possess. When I come back from the

Academy, perhaps—perhaps I'll propose to her. I know of no other girl around here who would make as good a wife as Rose. Of course I'll meet girls in the East, but those Eastern girls, from what I hear, are silly things; care more for fashionable dresses and theaters than for good literature."

Not for one instant did the thought of Carrie Carlton enter his mind as he watched the intellectual features of Rose Cowden, as she stood in the center of the room, her hands on the back of a chair, her countenance becoming more animated as she talked.

To George Carrie as a reality had long ago vanished, she had remained only as a sort of a dream. He loved her dearly, he knew, but that love seemed to be spent on something intangible, something beyond his reach. Here in Rose Cowden was a living reality. He had begun to feel that he could love Rose; yes he could love her without infringing on that love for the distant one. One was a living active presence, the other was a far-away spirit. The thought had even occurred to him that in loving Rose, his love for Carrie would to some extent be satisfied; in a measure replaced. When it came time to bid Rose farewell, he noticed that her usually pale face turned paler, and there was a slight quiver of the lips as she bid him good-bye. He was almost tempted to tell her he loved her, and that he intended asking her to marry him on his return from the East. If he had been in the habit of acting on impulse as quickly as do many young men, he would have proposed to her then and there. But George never acted on first impulse, he always re-examined his feelings later before making up his mind what action he should take. At any rate George and Rose had promised to write to each other.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRESENT AND THE PAST.

Once more George Brandon was riding in the mail cart with the grizzled old mail carrier over the river road. This time they were on their way from Brandonville to the county seat. This reminded George of that other ride with the mail carrier, when life seemed worth living because he expected to see Carrie Carlton.

Now life seemed full of hope because the long wished for opportunity of preparing for college had arrived, and because pleasant memories of his last talk with Rose Cowden were continually passing through his mind, and because of the fact that he expected to receive a letter from her once a week. Again he noticed the beauties of the landscape. "Ah! Kansas, Sunny Kansas, you are the best state of the Union after all, I'll come back to you, I'll never forget my boyhood days." This last thought was the cause of another thought to arise, which somewhat perplexed his mind, at any rate it caused him considerable uneasiness as to just what was the condition of his heart. "Boyhood days, oh! with whom were those boyhood days spent? With Carrie Carlton." Yes he and Carrie had played together. Well did he remember when they were lost in the woods, and the cardinal had sung to them, and he had said, as he put one arm around the golden-haired girl, "Never mind Carrie, dear. See Carrie, the red-bird is singing to cheer us up."

Oh! what if he should meet Carrie in New York. No doubt while attending the Academy on Long Island he would have an opportunity of visiting New York. But New York was a big city, he knew not in what part of the city she lived; perhaps she did not live there any more;

maybe she had married and was traveling in Europe, or residing in Paris. As he reflected on the almost impossibility of ever meeting Carrie again, he endeavored to banish the idea that he still loved her.

"I must bring myself back to the present, to the reality," he thought, "Carrie, oh! you dear one, I must think of you no more. To me you are lost. Rose, dear girl, I must think of you. You are the present, Carrie is of the past. You are real, Carrie is a dream. Oh! but the dream is the dearer. I must admit it, but being a dream I must forget." Thus did the dream and the real chase one another like phantoms through his mind while the old war veteran beside him told tale after tale of battle and prison. George seemed to be possessed of a double mind. He listened intently to the mail carrier's talk, laughing or applauding as the contingency required, yet he was thinking of the two girls all the while.

The train pulled up to the station at E——, and George Brandon entered one of the passenger coaches, and soon was speeding eastward across the beautiful landscape of eastern Kansas. The next morning he awakened just in time to witness the crossing of the Mississippi River. As he looked down the great wide river from the car window as the train moved slowly across the great steel bridge, he said to himself, "I must write to Rose about this." These words were quickly succeeded by the thought that Carrie had ridden across this very river, and looked on this very scene; and had she said? "I must write to Georgie about this."

"Here they are again," thought George, "the dream and the real; will I ever get rid of the dream? When will the real supersede the unreal?"

Then he closed his eyes in an endeavor to shut out all thoughts of either the real or the unreal. He took from his grip a book; it was an old Tanneys' Zoology, and endeavored to occupy his mind by reading about the Order of Passeres or Insectores. He became deeply absorbed in the book, he read on and on, until he came to the Tanagridæ or Tanagers. He read: "Closely related to the Warblers are the Tanagers or Tanagridæ, a very large group of oscines, noted for their brilliant plumage. Here belong the Scarlet Tanager, the males of which are wholly bright scarlet, except the wings and tail, which are black; and the Summer Red-bird of the Southern States, a bird whose general color is light red."

"Yes," thought George, "and the Scarlet Tanager, I believe, is called the 'red-bird' in the East, just as the Cardinal is called the 'red-bird' in the West, the same that sang Carrie and I to sleep in the woods."

He threw the book down on the seat. "Always that dream haunting me, no matter what I see or read, always something to remind me of the past, the loving past. No use, I may as well give up first as last and let the spell come and go at will."

And so it was, when crossing the fields of golden-eared and white-capped corn in Illinois and Indiana, the hills and blue grass pastures of Kentucky, the mountainous scenery of West Virginia, the old Colonial estates of Virginia, the old battle field of Bull Run near Manassas, the grand old Potomac, the Atlantic Plain with its great cities and multitudes of small farms, the Hudson with its numerous water craft of various descriptions, until he stepped from the ferry boat at midnight to the West Twenty-third Street station in New York. All of these he had said he would

write about to Rose, and all of these he thought of as having been seen by Carrie years before, and wondered if she had said, "I must write to Georgie about all of this."

He was not accustomed to the noise of a large city. Even at midnight, the streets were lighted as well as on the sunniest of days, and the rattle of vehicles on the pavement, the clang of the trolley bells, the shouting of the drivers to their horses, so bewildered the young Westerner that he, for once, forgot to think that he would write about this to Rose, or that Carrie had seen all of this. He entered a cab and was driven to the Long Island City ferry station, where he boarded a ferry boat and crossed the East River to Long Island City. Here he took a train for the station out on Long Island nearest the Academy of which he was soon to become a student. It was not till he was seated in a coach of the Long Island railroad that the thought crossed his mind that possibly Carrie was somewhere in the big noisy city he had just passed through.

CHAPTER XI.

FOOLED.

About the time George Brandon was on his way to the East, Frank Tilton stepped from a west-bound train to the station platform at Florence, Kansas. He looked at his watch then leisurely sauntered into the waiting room and sat down. He was waiting for the arrival of the passenger that was to take him south on a branch of the Santa Fe to E——.

"I wonder if she will know me with this big brown moustache," he said half-aloud as he gazed at a picture on the wall, framed back of a glass which reflected, somewhat indistinctly, his features, but enough that he could see the big moustache that he now wore.

"Mary Carlton was a lovely girl," thought Frank reminiscently, "she was pretty, intelligent, pure-hearted, possessed a fair amount of intellect, and very industrious. She will make some man a good wife. I have been thinking all this while of making her my wife, providing that cow-boy Ike hasn't got the better of me in that quarter. Don't know where Ike is. Mary never mentions his name in her letters, maybe he got killed in a train wreck down there in Texas, poor fellow. I hope he didn't get killed, but I do hope he's been side tracked in the race for Mary's heart and hand. But really I do wish Mary had a better education; she's had no easy time taking care of the Carlton household; had to bring up the two younger children after her mother died, no opportunity for much schooling, poor girl. In my position as principal of a high school and later as an instructor in a normal, I could easily have selected and probably won

a girl of my own educational standing. People call me a good-natured portly gentleman, and a man that when he is in Rome does as Rome does, but after all I was not so changeable as to forget Mary Carlton all of these years. If she was only well informed in some of the sciences, or literature, or something, I wouldn't care one red cent about her not being accustomed to society." Frank was a profuse thinker just as he was a voluble talker. The south branch train having pulled up, he entered a coach and sat about midway along the car. Just before the train was about to start, a tall man with a long moustache, the ends of which were trained to a straight point, came running from another train, sprang up the steps at the rear end of the coach in which sat Frank. He entered and took a seat near the door through which he had come. We recognize this man at once as Ike Morrow, for in all of these years of railroading in the lone star state it was evident that age had not left its marks on his features, for he looked not one day older than the day he talked temperance to Mary Carlton at the Brandon house when she and Mrs. Brandon were excited over the missing children. "Mary has never said one word about Frank Tilton in her letters," meditated Ike, stroking the pointed ends of his moustache and endeavoring to twist them to more of a point than ever. "I calculate that Frank has long ago fallen in love with and married another girl. I hope so anyway. Frank isn't a bad sort of a fellow, but he isn't steady enough for Mary, he's a little too noisy. I said I'd go back and marry Mary Carlton as soon as I got up a little in the world, and now that I am about to take my new position as a railroad official with headquarters at Kansas City, I reckon I'm ready for a home, and Mary

could help make a fellow a good home better than any girl I know of. I am mighty glad Frank isn't on this train going back to Mary too, for I—." Ike's train of thoughts were rudely interrupted as he noticed the broad shoulders of Frank ahead of him. "That certainly looks like Frank,—but that big moustache,—surely it isn't him. My! what if it was." Just then Frank turned his head to gaze out of the window at the beautiful landscape of stone-fenced farms and partially wooded hills.

"It is Frank sure enough," said Ike fearfully. "I'll wait and see if he gets off at E——, and if he does, maybe he will not think of going out to Brandonville. I won't let him know I'm on the train, it might put him in the notion of going to Brandonville; guess I'd better go in another car for fear he will see me," and he did so very quietly.

At E—— Ike got off on the opposite side of the train from the station and walked to the post-office.

Frank stepped heavily from the car step to the platform and also made for the post-office.

Ike reached the post-office first by right of his long legs, engaged a passage to Brandonville with the mail carrier, and walked to the livery barn to await the arrival of the old veteran for his team and mail coach; the old one-horse mail cart had been replaced by a brand new stage coach. Not long after Ike's departure from the post-office Frank came walking in, perspiration standing out on his forehead, hat pushed back, and quite out of breath. He had hurried for fear of missing a ride with the mail carrier to Brandonville.

"You stay here, Frank," said the old veteran graciously, "till I come round with the coach to take on the mail."

At which Frank thanked him as he gladly sat down on a bench to wait.

The team hitched, the old "war-horse" climbed into his high seat at the front of the coach, while Ike entered the coach and closed the door. "I ought to ride up there with that good old man and listen to his war stories, but I want to be alone, I want to think out what to say to Mary."

As the stage rolled up in front of the post-office, Frank opened the stage door and nearly fell backwards down the step in his surprise at seeing Ike sitting in one corner. He quickly regained his presence of mind, and extending a hand, greeted Ike with, "Glad to see you, old man. How has the world used you, Ike? Give an account of yourself."

"I've been doing pretty well, Frank; how's yourself?" said Ike, shaking hands quite heartily. "Going out to Chelsea or to Syracuse Springs?" he continued testily.

"To Brandonville," came the dreaded answer from Frank with an amusing twinkle in his eyes.

During the ride to Brandonville, the two rivals talked agreeably, never once mentioning the name of one of the Carltons.

Ike was pleased to note that Frank seemingly had dropped the use of slang; and in turn Frank noticed with some surprise that Ike was no more the cow-boy, but a man who had worked himself up in the world by hard experience.

At Brandonville the two men entered the post-office together. After some little embarrassment and hesitancy, Ike called Lawrence Cowden to one side and enquired in a whisper, if there was any mail for the Carltons; that if there was he would take it along as he was going over to Carlton's right away.

The tall, slender man turned pale, when informed—also in a whisper—that the Carltons had moved to New York several years before.

While Ike was gathering this astonishing information, Frank had espied Rose Cowden passing in front of the office, and ran out to greet her. He had quite a chat with her, during which he was surprised at the wealth of knowledge she seemed to possess. On inquiry he was informed that she had acquired most of it by home reading and study.

“In the face of her knowledge and intellectual powers, and her otherwise pretty features, her eyes do not detract in the least from her beauty,” thought Frank, becoming more and more interested in the young lady, whom when he had last seen was only a little girl.

Presently he re-entered the post-office and drawing Lawrence to one side, in a half-whisper said, “I’m going over to Carlton’s and I may as well take their mail along if there is any.” Whereupon he was given—also in a half-whisper—the same information that had been given to Ike a few moments before.

Frank and Ike went out of the office together as they had come in.

“Where are you going now?” asked Frank, his eyes twinkling again.

“Don’t know,” answered Ike honestly and a little sheepishly.

“Funny, isn’t it,” volunteered Frank.

“Not very,” answered Ike soberly.

“I mean it is strange we didn’t hear of their going, can’t make it out,” explained the portly man; then becoming bolder, he essayed with “Mary never wrote that they

were living in New York; she did say that they went to New York, but I supposed it was only on a visit, for she did not stay long, but went to her uncle's at Wichita, and just before I started from Missouri, she wrote that she was going home. I supposed she meant to Brandonville, but no doubt she meant to New York."

Ike said nothing, but gazed at the ground as the sad truth began to dawn on his mind. He had received the same information from Mary as had Frank.

"I think I'll return to Kansas City," said Ike, walking away.

"Well, I'm going to stay here for the present," said Frank, a vision of Rose Cowden's pretty face coming suddenly before his mind. Then he added mentally, "I don't mean to go back on Mary, but I like that Rose Cowden, and I'm going to see a little more of her anyway."

CHAPTER XII.

A SURPRISE.

George Brandon stepped from the Long Island train to the platform of the little station at a quaint little village half a mile from the Academy grounds. He walked the winding road lined on either side by locust trees, with here and there a huge chestnut or white oak, that lead from the village to the Academy. He walked through the campus to the big school-building which was nearly covered with ivy vines. It was still dark, and there were no lights in the building so, not wishing to disturb anyone, he walked around to the rear of the building. Here not far back near a large grove of locust trees, he saw what appeared to be a large frame building; on closer examination it proved to be a sort of a shop, gymnasium, warehouse, and a couple of living rooms combined. The building stood on the side of a hill, so that a basement was formed in the rear, which seemed to have been used as a temporary stable. George went into this stable and sat down on a barrel. He soon felt sleepy and began to nod; once when he nearly lost himself in sleep, he gave a sudden start which caused the barrel to tip, he falling over backwards across the barrel, smashing in several of the staves. The noise of the crashing staves evidently aroused some one sleeping in one of the rooms above, for he heard the unmistakable voice of a negro calling, "What youse doin' down dere, who be you all?"

"I'm a student arrived from the night train," answered George, rising and endeavoring to repair the barrel by pressing the staves in place.

"A shtudent eh, Ise knows ebery shtudent's voice heah, but I done don't know your voice, dat's sutain," replied the negro with evident misgivings.

"Well, I am no buglar anyway," assured George with confidence.

"Don't know if youse a buglar or not; don't think youse hab any business round heah anyhow," answered the negro threateningly, at the same time making sure that the door and windows were securely fastened.

George leaned against a manger and remained quiet to await developments. He could hear the negro talking in a low tone of voice to some one else in the room; probably his wife. Evidently they were connected with the Academy in some way; probably the man was the janitor and the woman a waitress or a chambermaid or a cook. After the lapse of considerable time all was quiet, the colored people evidently had regained their composure and gone to sleep. George now took a walk around the premises, and as he again turned the corner in the rear of the Academy building, he was met by some one with a lantern in one hand and a hatchet in the other. Instantly up went the hand with the hatchet as though to strike. George sprang backwards quickly, but at that instant the other hand with the lantern was raised and the light from the lantern shown full in George's face.

"I see by youse face youse be no buglar now," said the colored janitor.

"Well, well, if it isn't Pete Booker; why, how do you do, Pete, don't you know me?" said George recognizing in the janitor the same colored man who had worked for his father in Kansas and had received such a fright from the Oto Indians.

"T'se beg pawdon, boss, but I'se don't 'member youse,

reckon I'se clean fo'got, but dis heah old head o' mine am so chuck full ob tings pertainin' to de 'Cademy dat it done can't 'member good any moah anyhow," apologized Pete.

"Don't you remember Georgie Brandon, Pete, that used to—to—play with little Carrie Carlton out in Kansas?" Thought George, "Here comes that dream again, no use to fight it, it seems to be a part of my very existence."

"Shuah 'nough," said Pete dropping the hatchet and extending a black hand cordially. "I'se mighty glad to see youse, Massa Georgie, but youse growed to be such a big man, and I'se reckon she'll be mighty glad to see youse, bein' as youse hain't seen each odder fo' so long."

George wondered just who that "she" might be that Pete alluded to.

"Come in wid me, Georgie, I'se been 'tendin' de furnace, we alls 'll go in our little kitchen and wait till de moahnin'." And as they entered the room indicated, Pete called his wife out. "Dis am Massa Georgie, Lucy, what use to play wid Carrie Carlton way out in de wild West, whare de Injuns am too numerous. Georgie, dis am my wife Lucy what I'se got way down in old Virginie. Dis am no good place fo' to bring such gentmens as you be, Massa Georgie, but I reckon youse won't mind till moahnin'."

"Thank you, Pete, I'm glad to stay here," answered the young man as he sat down on a rather rickety chair, which threatened to give way at every move he made.

"Reckon youse better set on dis heah trunk, Georgie, dat chair am got weak legs an youse am liable to take a tumble," said Pete noticing the creaking of the chair. George obediently sat on the trunk. In the morning Pete conducted George to the matron of the Academy, a kindly middle aged lady, who in turn presented him to the prin-

cipal of the school. He was pleased to find the head of the school a western man who had graduated from an eastern college. Being a Westerner the principal naturally took quite an interest in George, giving him valuable advice in the choice of his course of studies. The breakfast bell having rung, the principal escorted the new student down to the dining room and gave him a seat at his own table. George did not notice his immediate surroundings until he had eaten half of his breakfast. Just as he was about to convey a piece of meat to his mouth, he caught sight of a lady teacher at one of the other tables that caused him to turn pale, and his eyes to open wider, while the piece of meat fell from his fork to the plate. "That lady," thought George, "certainly presents a striking resemblance to Carrie Carlton." There were the same bright blue eyes, the golden hair—only there was much more of it—the same pretty lips, the same fair face, the straight nose, the same queenly poise of the head. She seemed as cheerful as ever, though at times when not engaged in conversation with those around her, he thought he detected a seriousness in the blue eyes that was akin to sadness, as though she had had some sad event in her life which she was unable to blot entirely from her mind.

"Will you please tell me who that young lady with the golden hair is?" finally asked George of the principal.

"That," said the principal, noticing a slight tremor in his new student's voice, "is Miss Carlton, our Latin teacher."

"Where is she from?" asked George despite the fact that he might appear a little too inquisitive.

"From New York," informed the principal. "She graduated from S—— College with high honors, and has spent some time studying and traveling abroad."

"Would you mind telling me her given name?" asked George persistently.

"Caroline," answered the principal looking somewhat puzzled at George's undue inquisitiveness.

"Did not she come to New York from the West?" asked George.

"I have heard her mention the name of Kansas several times; do you think you have met her before?" said the principal becoming interested and a little curious.

"I think I have, but she may not remember," said George in a manner that indicated he intended going no further with that subject in his conversation.

"Caroline Carlton—Carrie Carlton," were the words that kept running through George's mind as he sat at the table unable to finish the remainder of his breakfast. His appetite had suddenly failed.

"What had I better do? Will she recognize me? Oh! Carrie, my Carrie of the days gone by. But you may not be my Carrie now. Here I am just a beginner in the academical course. Four years at the Academy, four years at college, and two or three years abroad, before I will be on an educational level with her. Besides I'm poor and may be obliged to stop a year now and then to earn more money with which to carry me through school." These were the thoughts that began to course through the young man's mind as he sat at the table unable to keep his eyes from his Carrie, no—Miss Caroline Carlton.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ACHING HEART.

After breakfast George went to the room assigned to him. He was glad he was to room alone for he wanted to be alone; to think it all out. He sat down on the bed, he noticed that the spotlessly clean white bedspread corresponded well with the white iron bedstead, but he noticed no more of what the room contained, his mind was absorbed in ferreting out some plan of dealing with the dream which had become real. Yes, the dream was no more a dream so far as the existence of Carrie Carlton in his daily life was concerned, but was she the same Carrie as of yore? She had not noticed him yet, if she did would her old love return, or was it old love? Possibly that love was as ardent and true as ever. But he had not received the promised letter. The faint hope that had begun to rise in George's mind turned to almost despair as he reasoned that she must have forgotten him, must have found another to take his place in her heart; or was it possible that her mind had been so taken up with her studies and her school work that there was left no room for the passion of love. If so the old love may have remained dormant, and might, at the sight of him, be stirred to action once more. Oh! he hoped so. Hope was coming back again; but it quickly disappeared as he thought of her environments during all of these years; impossible for a girl possessing so many attractions as Carrie to remain unimpressed by the many society young men; men of accomplishments; professors, lawyers, millionaires, to be met with at every social function. Yet now that the dream of the past was real, a mad love raged, thumped, railed, and threshed around with its pentup

energies in his heart. Here in this very building the only girl he ever really loved, the only one he really could love, yet because of the gulf of social and educational difference between them this love must be sealed up in his aching, weary heart. Oh better that he had never seen her, than endure the reopening of the old sore in his heart. And poor Rose Cowden; how was he to write a letter to her with this tumultuous heart beating for another. He felt sure that Rose would scan his letters for some sign of a heretofore unexpressed love, that she probably hoped for his return as a devoted lover. "I must write to the poor girl," he said as he took pen, ink, and paper from his trunk. "I must tell her about the trip, she will be interested in that trip, she is so interested in travel."

He wrote a letter to Rose, but tore it up as it gave a poor description of his journey, besides he was afraid she would detect in the tone of the letter his real feelings. He wrote another but decided it was worse than the first, then after a third trial with no better success he placed the writing material back in the trunk, and tore up the letters.

"I'll have to wait till I cool off a bit," he said, "though I ought to write right away so she will get it as soon as possible, for she will be looking for it, and I promised to write."

But the more he tried to cool off, the more heated he got. The perspiration fairly stood out on his forehead, though a cool salt water breeze was coming in through the open window.

"Well," he said to himself, "this is Saturday, no school till Monday, and I heard that curly haired, chubby, red faced student say that Miss Carlton was going to New York on the morning train. I won't see her till Monday, and then, what will I do, how shall I act, what shall I say?

Guess I'll take a walk and quiet my nerves." With that he reached for his cap, stepped out into the long hall, went hurriedly down two flights of stairs, and out on the main walk that ran at right angles across the campus to the macadamized road. He walked rapidly along the walk, and was just passing the main entrance to the right wing of the building when he was conscious of a queenly looking lady dressed in a cream colored suit, which corresponded well with her wealth of golden hair. He was also conscious of the fact that this lady of almost angelic beauty was no other than Miss Carlton. His heart beat wildly, his knees became weak and shaky, his hand trembled as he endeavored to take his watch from his vest pocket, by way of doing something to calm his agitation. "Will she notice me, will she know me, if she does will, oh! *will* she recognize me as Georgie of the days gone by, does she love me, or has that love flown?" She seemed to be having some difficulty with a parasol, and did not notice who he was till he had passed her. He tried to speak to her, but a lump filled his throat and he could not, he attempted to lift his cap, but his hand seemed paralyzed and did not move, he was still holding his watch and still looking at it. Thus he passed her, walked rapidly down the path to the road and following the road till he came to a sharp turn around a grove of white oaks which hid him from the view of the Academy building. Here he sat down by the roadside completely exhausted.

"Why didn't I speak to her and receive my fate and have it done with? Now I am as much in the dark as ever. I might at least have told her who I was and thus been able to discover whether any trace of her old love remained. Coward that I was not to do so. But pshaw! what chance is there for me, what right have I to expect

a reciprocation of my love; I, a poor, unsophisticated Westerner; she a queenly beauty who has seen even princes and kings and been introduced to the nobility. And what baron or marquis or duke could withstand such supreme beauty, such intellectuality as one can see at one glance in Miss Caroline Carlton—once my own Carrie of the days gone by.”

He arose and followed the road until he saw in a field to the north a heavy growth of young trees. In this little grove he plunged, but stopped short as he espied a beautiful scarlet tanager sitting on a limb singing.

“A red bird singing to cheer me up,” thought George. “There are no cardinals or western red birds here, but here is the tanager, the eastern red bird. Would Carrie remember the song of that western red bird, if she were here by my side, listening to the song of this red bird?”

“My God! this won’t do, it recalls old memories too vividly. I must get out of here.” Accordingly he retraced his steps to a few boulders glittering with mica, on a hill in an open part of the field. From here he could see in the distance Long Island Sound, and the Connecticut coast beyond. He stood here endeavoring to absorb his mind in watching the many yachts and other water craft on the Sound.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LATIN CLASS.

Monday morning came, a heavy fog shutting out the sun from view, had settled over Long Island. The atmosphere was heavy with moisture. "Gloomy without and gloomy within," thought George as he entered the dining room for breakfast. Without looking to either side, he walked straight to his chair at the table, and it was not till he had, with forced appetite, eaten half of his breakfast, that he gained enough courage to glance in the direction of the table at which sat Miss Carlton. Yes, there she was, queenly and beautiful as ever, her self control giving her an ease of manner and a poise that no one could detect what turbulent thoughts might have been raging in her mind. Had she recognized him yet, had she even noticed him yet? The fact that few students from the West ever entered the Academy caused his arrival to be generally known to the students, and no doubt to the members of the faculty. Surely she knew all about it by this time, but she not even so much as cast a fleeting glance toward his end of the table. Perhaps she was practicing self control until an opportunity occurred for meeting him. But why hope for a recognition on the old footing, when she was so much his superior in social, educational, and financial standing? George suddenly became aware that he had not touched a mouthful of food since the first glance at Miss Carlton; that the principal and students at his table were aware of his failing appetite, though not one as yet had guessed the cause. He excused himself from the table and walked out of the dining room, and as he did so, he gave one quick glance

at Miss Carlton; she was looking at him, their eyes met for one instant. His heart seemed to beat like a sledge hammer, she did not smile, but he tried to console himself by remembering that she did not look away. He called himself a fool for not practicing the same self control that she evidently was using. He might just as well have spoken to her when starting out on that walk Saturday morning instead of running away like a coward. Shame on himself; where was the man in him? "I'll brave it out, if the result breaks my heart, and speak to her at the very first opportunity," he said half aloud in his room. "I'll do more than that, I'll make an opportunity to see and talk to her. I'll take my fate like a man."

At the chapel exercise, George Brandon was prepared to look Miss Carlton straight in the face. But for some unknown reason, Miss Carlton was not one of the half circle of teachers on the platform back of the principal that morning.

"Never mind," boldly thought George, "the Latin recitation takes place at 10:30 A. M. and she is the teacher. I've got my lesson learned thoroughly, and after the recital is over, and the class files out, I'll linger behind and speak to her."

At 10:30 George arose to go with his classmates to Miss Carlton's recitation room. By the time he arrived at the class room, his courage had left, and he felt as limp as a rag when he took his seat in the farthest corner of the room.

Miss Carlton had the names of her class members down in alphabetical order, and George Brandon was the first name on the list.

The first part of the lesson was the declension of the nouns *poema*, *sermo*, and *virgo*.

"George Brandon, you may take the word poema," Miss Carlton said pleasantly.

George arose and began: "Poema, poematis, poemati——" At that moment he caught his teacher's eyes, which were looking at him rather more tenderly than was her wont in looking at a student reciting his lesson.

"Po em, po—em, po—em," stuttered George, his face reddening and the cold perspiration coming out on his forehead, in his endeavor to find the ending of the word in the accusative singular. But his well learned Latin lesson had suddenly vanished before the tenderness of the blue eyes.

"I—I—I've forgotten," were the words that stumbled out of the bewildered student's mouth as he looked down at the floor.

"You may be excused from reciting, you are not feeling well," said the teacher graciously.

George sat down; it seemed to him as though he sat down with the weight of a thousand pounds. "It was good of her to extricate me from my dilemma in that way," thought the uncomfortable student. "I'll thank her for her kindness after the recitation is over; and those eyes, but I must not think about them now," and soon his head seemed to be in a whirl as he endeavored to force an application of his mind to the lesson.

Before the recitation was over George regained his composure and was able to look at those blue eyes without flinching, but he noticed that she carefully withheld the tenderness from them during the remainder of the recitation period. As the members of the class filed out of the room, George, who brought up the rear of the line, stopped before he passed through the doorway.

"Carrie——," said the young Westerner, then remembering that he was addressing his instructor, he quickly added, "Miss Carlton, I am glad to see you, and I want to thank you for letting me off with that Latin recitation." He was for the first time since his arrival at the school in full control of his emotions.

"I am glad to see you again, George," answered Miss Carlton with just a tremor in her voice, extending her hand. There was just a suspicion of tenderness in her eyes too, as George took her hand. He was not sure that he detected the tremor and the tenderness, he was afraid it was due to his own imagination, and he still stood smiling rather soberly, but master of himself, and as he shook hands with her, he ventured to explain, "I have lost considerable sleep lately and my mind was not in good working order during class recitation."

"Yes," she answered, thoughtfully, "you have had a long journey from the West," and she added, still more thoughtfully, while a dreamy look came into her otherwise bright, expressive eyes, "I remember how tired and sleepy I was when I took that same journey." This nearly disconcerted George. Here was the dream telling of the dream, and the dream certainly had come very forcibly into the present.

"You remember, then?" said George simply.

"Yes, I do," answered she, with a long emphasis on the "yes." She looked tired, and acted a little embarrassed; and George was debating within his mind whether to leave the class room or to say more, when the clatter of many footsteps was heard, as the class in advanced Latin came down the stairway. "Good-bye, Carrie—er—Miss Carlton," said George as he passed out of the room. He was conscious, as soon as the words were out of his mouth, that

it was quite unnecessary to say "good-bye" when he would see her again in the dining room at noon.

"Come again," she answered, looking up quickly as he cast one glance back at her as he prepared to ascend the stairway. She too was aware, after she had given the invitation, that it was not needed, when of course he would come again with his Latin class at 10:30 the next morning.

"I wonder if she does remember old times," thought George as he reached the head of the stairway. His mind was so occupied with such thoughts that he inadvertently opened a door to another class room instead of the door to the assembly or study room.

"Beg pardon," he apologized to the teacher and the physics class, as he retreated from the room.

At the dinner table that day, he noticed that Miss Carlton seemed to have lost her appetite, and he wondered, yes, he hoped, though it might seem cruel to do so, that she had lost her desire for food from the same cause that he was constantly losing his. At the supper table he saw that she ate but little. His own appetite seemed to come back as he began to hope, almost believe, that Miss Carlton was remembering old times, and that probably her old love was being rekindled.

"Strange, isn't it?" he thought, "her loss, so far as appetite is concerned, is my gain, but I'll make it her gain in the end, if she will allow me. No—no—I forget the impossibility, I forget that our lives are so widely separated by—by society, etc.," and immediately he began to lose his own appetite. "But she called me George, instead of Mr. Brandon. Still her position as teacher gives her the right to call me by my first name. Did not she call the other students by their given names? Strange how I snatch at every little straw of encouragement. Still,"

he reasoned, "she said to come again. Of course she knew I'd come again with my classmates tomorrow. She must have meant, talk with her again."

The next day he did not forget his Latin lesson in the class room, in fact he recited better than any other one of his classmates, and he noticed she looked pleased.

"She is interested in Latin herself, and she may be pleased because I am taking an interest in Latin," thought George, becoming a little conceited.

As the class ascended the stairway to return to the study room, George lingered behind, and looking straight at Miss Carlton said, "I would give the whole world, if I possessed it, to have had the educational training that you have had, Miss Carlton." He wanted to say "Carrie" again, but checked himself in time.

"I can see no reason why you may not have the same educational training that I have had, and it is not necessary that you own the whole world in order to get it either," encouraged his instructor.

"Yes, I know, but it will take so many years before I am in your position, I wish I was there right now," said he with some agitation.

"Never mind, George," she began.

"Oh, if she would call me 'Georgie,'" thought he.

"You aren't old," continued the teacher. "You will learn rapidly, and some day you may pass far beyond me."

"Oh! don't you understand, Carrie?" said George impulsively, forgetting that it was Miss Caroline Carlton, forgetting she was his instructor, only the Carrie of the past was before him now, only she was a grown woman now, the best woman, the only woman in the world for him.

Again that tenderness came into her eyes, and she was about to reply when the advanced Latin class came tramping into the room, and George hurriedly ascended the stairs into the study room, wishing that that advanced Latin class would refuse to come to Miss Carlton's class room, or that the teacher in charge of the study room would forget to call the class.

"Oh, that tenderness in her eyes," thought George, "what was she about to reply? Would she have called me Georgie? Confound that advanced Latin class. But what is the use, we are separated by a barrier, one that will take years to overcome. But maybe she will wait, how do I know? I wish I knew all that has happened since she left Kansas."

Each day George engaged Miss Carlton in conversation just after his Latin recital, and each time the advanced Latin class came marching in just as an important climax was about to be reached in the conversation.

CHAPTER XV.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON STROLL.

Another Saturday morning came round, a bright, clear morning it was too. Miss Carlton did not go to New York this time. Several of the students and two or three of the teachers, of which Miss Carlton was one, were planning to take a walk to the beach in the afternoon. It was a common Saturday afternoon occurrence for members of the faculty and a number of students to take a walk to the Sound beach, or to Arbutus Hill, or perhaps to the village, especially if there was no football or baseball match between the Academy team and some other team. George Brandon had been informed of this particular walking party, not by the students, but by Miss Carlton herself at the close of the Latin class exercise Friday forenoon. This amounted to, in George's eyes, practically an invitation, and he was promenading on the campus long before the party was ready to start. When they did go, George sauntered along with the other students, the three teachers taking the lead. Mr. Pennock, the science teacher, was one of the three, and he walked between Miss Carlton and the other lady teacher. He appeared to be more attentive to the former than the latter, which fact George was quick to perceive, and it made him feel awfully uncomfortable, though he declared again and again to himself that Mr. Pennock had more right by Carrie's side than did he, by reason of Mr. Pennock's higher social position. Once when they were strolling beneath the shade of overlapping boughs from the great oaks and elms along the roadside, Miss Carlton glanced back at George. He was watching her at the time, in fact he had been watching her all of the

time, and their eyes met. She smiled faintly. That faint smile caused George to nearly lose his head. He started to walk faster, intending to catch up to the teachers and walk by Miss Carlton's side, but on second thought decided it an unwise move to make before all of those students. They might pass remarks about his presumption. He noticed that there were more girl students than men students in the party, and there were many real nice girls too, but George had eyes only for Miss Carlton, and while he became acquainted with and conversed with several of the girls, he kept a watchful eye on the three teachers in the lead.

At the Sound several of the party sat on the sand and dipped their hands in the salty water each time the waves rolled toward the shore, others busied themselves with picking up pretty shells, while a few went to the boat houses and donned bathing suits for a swim. The three teachers were sitting on a large boulder, Mr. Pennock gallantly holding an umbrella above their heads as a protection against the hot sun. George stood not far away apparently gazing toward the green hills of the Connecticut shore across the Sound, but in reality endeavoring to look out of one corner of his eye at the teachers.

"Won't you come and sit here, aren't you tired of standing, George?" were the glad words he heard from Miss Carlton, and he saw her looking straight at him with her pretty blue eyes, while an arched smile played about her mouth.

"Thank you," responded George, taking a seat beside Miss Carlton as she drew her skirts closer to her to make room for him to sit on the boulder. She seemed more than ever his Carrie now, so near that the breeze blew strands of golden hair about in such a way that a few of

the hairs lightly brushed against his face. They electrified him, the touch of those dear hairs. "Oh! that I were in Mr. Pennock's position; what would I do? I'd—oh! what wouldn't I do? I'd feel that I was her equal and I'd lose no time in taking the first opportunity to claim her as my own Carrie. I'd recall the past, I'd rekindle the old love, I'd go in to win." His reverie was interrupted by, "George, look at those star fish clinging to the under side of that boulder in the edge of the water. You never saw star fish before, did you? I remember you were always so interested in things of nature, especially birds and fish," from Miss Carlton.

"Oh! I'm glad you remember, Ca——, Miss Carlton," answered George with a thumping heart.

"You were going to say 'Carrie,' you may call me that if you wish, Georgie. We used to call each other Carrie and Georgie. I don't mind," said Miss Carlton in a low voice, so low that Mr. Pennock could not catch the meaning of the words, though he was jealously inclining his head to one side that he might hear.

"Yes, yes, Carrie, I remember all of that, but I was afraid you had forgotten," said George, also in a low voice.

"Never," answered Carrie, as Mr. Pennock looked at his watch and arose, and said it was time to be on their way back to the Academy.

"The teachers usually take the lead, but since we haven't had a good talk together since we used to ride side by side on our ponies in Kansas, you may walk with me on our way back to the Academy, Georgie," said Carrie as she arose with George from the boulder.

"Oh! thank you, Carrie, I so much wanted to talk to you about what has happened since you left Kansas, where

all you have been, and what you have been doing, if you do not mind telling me," replied George gratefully.

And so they walked, George and Miss Carlton dropping behind Mr. Pennock and the other lady teacher, to the great chagrin of the professor of science. Miss Carlton told George of her school days at the preparatory school, her college days, her graduation at the head of her class, her year at Oxford and a year in Paris, her travels with her brother through continental Europe, Palestine, and Egypt, their home in upper New York near Riverside Drive in sight of the Palisades of the Hudson, her father's death, her plans for becoming a specialist in the dead languages, and her interest in the excavations being conducted in Egypt, Palestine, and Greece. George listened, enraptured by her animated conversation; new blood seemed to have been infused into his veins; hope, courage, took possession of him. He in turn became spirited in his conversation as he began, at her inference, to tell her of his plans for the future, his purpose to become a naturalist. Then he began to talk of the past, and his voice became sad.

"Never mind, Georgie, wait till another time, we are nearly to the campus now," interrupted Miss Carlton kindly. "Keep up your courage and don't get down-hearted," and she extended her hand, which he took in his as he said rather huskily, "Thank you." And as she entered the big doorway of the right wing of the building she gave him a kindly smile as she cast a quick glance back at him. George lifted his cap, tried to smile and walked, not to his room, but out to the boulder covered hill in the field where he could watch the ships on the Sound.

"Did she purposely interrupt me when I began talking of the past?" thought George seriously, as he sat on a mica studded boulder. "Wait till another time," she had said.

Would she grant him that other time? Or was she simply putting him off in hopes that he would fail to bring up the subject again. But she had said, "Keep your courage, don't get downhearted." Was he to gain a gleam of hope by this, or was it simply an effort on her part to extend sympathy without meaning to give hope for that which his heart craved? She had given him a reassuring smile in that last glance, but was it simply a means whereby she intended him not to become despondent? Why had she granted him the privilege of calling her Carrie, and why did she call him Georgie, if the old love was not being awakened in her heart? Or did she do this simply for old acquaintance sake, because she wanted to be a friend to him, to cause him to feel more at home in a strange land and among strangers?

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. PENNOCK'S ADVICE.

George Brandon found some difficulty in writing the kind of a letter he thought Rose Cowden expected to receive from him. But he wrote a long letter describing his trip, the school, the surrounding country. He was careful to not give her too much hope for any closer relationship with himself, yet wrote a very kind, brotherly letter. He also informed her of the fact that Carrie Carlton was his instructor in Latin. Rose was well aware of the former attachment between himself and Carrie, and he believed that she would divine the probability of the old attachment being resumed. He felt that it was cruel to tell Rose about Carrie's connection with the Academy, still he believed the sooner she knew the better. He advised and encouraged her to learn all she could about literature.

George was pleased when he read in her answer to his letter that Frank Tilton was still at Brandonville and was actually taking an interest in her, calling frequently to advise and help her in her favorite study, and that she thought Frank a real nice fellow and was glad that he called. "That will come out all right," said George to himself as he sat on the white bedspread that was so neatly spread over his bed by the hand of Lucy, the chambermaid. "I'll bet their mutual interest will develop into a still deeper feeling." The door of his room was ajar, and as he sat thinking and hoping and thinking and fearing by turns, he heard Mr. Pennock say to one of the senior students, "I just received a letter from Mr. Terry; he is a student at Jena in Germany."

Mr. Terry had been a member of the Academy faculty the year before.

"I believe Mr. Terry and Miss Carlton graduated from S—— College in the same class, did they not?" inquired the senior student.

"Yes, I believe they did," answered the science teacher, and noticing that George Brandon's door was partly open, he added, more for George's benefit than for the senior student, "I hear the two became great friends, and that they correspond with each other."

George felt sick at heart at this unpleasant news, and not wishing to hear any more he quietly closed his room door. Mr. Pennock, who was jealous of George's apparent attentiveness to Miss Carlton, went still further in his scheme to discourage such attentiveness, and entered George's room that evening and began thus: "George Brandon, I came in here to have a little talk with you on a rather delicate matter. Of course I understand you were acquainted with Miss Carlton out West somewhere before she came East. But you will please pardon my apparent presumption, I hope, when I inform you that your after class chats with Miss Carlton and your attentions to her during our walk last Saturday afternoon are being talked about scandalously by the students. For her sake and also to save you further trouble, I would advise you to discontinue such actions." Without waiting for a reply the science teacher walked out of the room. George had no reply for him, he only looked at him scornfully while receiving the confidential instructions and advice. He knew Mr. Pennock liked Miss Carlton, and that he was prompted more by jealousy than any other motive in giving him such advice. Nevertheless George was aware that there might be considerable truth in the teacher's

statements. The students might be talking about it, and that might lessen her influence over them as a teacher. He realized the reasonableness of Mr. Pennock's advice after all.

After class recital the next day, George was about to follow his classmates out of Miss Carlton's class room without stopping to chat, when she called after him. "Georgie, I want to speak to you a moment." He turned quickly around and re-entered the room and closed the door. "What is it, Carrie?" he said tenderly. "Have you heard that Ike Morrow and sister Mary are to be married?"

"No," answered George in surprise.

"Well, they are, Ike came all of the way from Kansas City to see her. He left Frank Tilton at Brandonville. He said something about he and Frank going to Brandonville to find Mary."

"Oh, yes," spoke up George, "I heard that Frank was making frequent calls on Rose Cowden."

"Oh! that's fine," replied Miss Carlton.

"But, Carrie, I have something to say that concerns you. Mr. Pennock informs me that I ought not to talk with you after class recital; that the students are talking about it."

Miss Carlton colored slightly as she said, "Georgie, I care not what the students say or Mr. Pennock either. You are a member of one of my Latin classes, and I have a perfect right to detain you in the class room after recitation, and talk to you as much as I wish. I am a member of the faculty and able to look after my own affairs without any interference or suggestions from Mr. Pennock. You are a little older than the average student here, and trying to make up for lost time, and you need all of the encouragement and sympathy possible from your instructors, and

I for one will do all in my power to help you follow out your plan of study." The advanced Latin class coming down the stairway, George made his exit.

"Good for Carrie, she's a will of her own," thought George as he took his seat in the study room. Then he experienced a sinking of heart as he remembered the last part of her conversation. "So it is because she has pity on me for my advanced age, and wants to encourage and help me in my plan of study, that she is willing to call me 'Georgie,' and to be called 'Carrie' by me?"

"Do you know a Mr. Terry?" asked George of his Latin teacher the next day after the class had been dismissed.

"Why, yes, I do, Georgie," she answered, looking a little puzzled.

George's imagination took her puzzled look for embarrassment and said no more about Mr. Terry, but left the room. The next Saturday afternoon George was riding a bicycle down the walk that passed through the campus to the road. At the end of the walk he sprang from his bicycle and walked down the stone steps carrying the cycle. At the bottom of the last step he noticed a letter, picked it up, and saw that the address on the envelope read "Miss Caroline Carlton, D——, Long Island, New York," and the postmark bore the name of "Jena."

"A letter from Mr. Terry in Germany," thought George, a sickening feeling coming over him. He thought of taking the letter from the envelope, for it had been opened, but that would not be right, still if he could only read the letter and find out the real relation between Carrie and Mr. Terry he would be beyond doubt, the matter would be settled then. At last he gave way to the temptation and drew the letter from the envelope. He did not take time to unfold the letter, for his eye caught the following

words on the side of the letter exposed to view: "Dear Carrie, I can not express to you the great joy and happiness you have caused me to experience by your saying that one little word."

"God help me, that's enough!" cried out George in pain, as he hastily replaced the letter in its envelope. "I know too well what that one little word was, it was the word 'yes,' in answer to his proposal of marriage. Fool that I was ever to hope for the rekindling of that old love in her heart." He gave the letter to the janitor's little boy and giving him a dime told him to take the letter to Miss Carlton and tell her that he (the boy) found it.

George left word with the matron that he was going away and would not return till Monday morning. He walked to the boat landing, took a Sound steamer for New York, walked up and down Broadway and Fifth avenue and other streets till he was tired, then he rode on the trolley and the elevated trains till night. He slept at a hotel in Long Island City, slept because he was tired and worn out. Sunday he walked and rode some more, then returned by boat to the north shore of Long Island, remained over night at a seashore hotel, and walked to the Academy Monday morning. But he felt too sick at heart to study or attend classes, so he got an excuse for sickness from the principal. He could neither eat nor sleep now. He slipped out of his room and went to Pete's room in the boys' gymnasium building.

"What am de mattah wid you, Georgie?" began the good-hearted old colored man, "youse look all done up. Youse got somedings powerful on you mind, Georgie. Tell dis heah old colowed man, an' he'll done give you all de sympat'y he kin, and he's got a powerful lot ob it fo' you, Georgie."

"Carrie don't love me any more," blurted out George almost giving way to tears.

"Dat's jus' whar you am mistaken, Massa Georgie, she do love you, but she not gwine tell you jus' now, go right on wid youse book larnin', and arter while she tell you all 'bout it."

"I wish what you say was true, Pete, but I am afraid you are mistaken, she gets letters from a Mr. Terry in Germany, I found one of them, and I read part of the letter, I should not have done so I know, but I wanted to know."

"What youse read in dat lettah, Georgie?"

"Oh, I read enough to cause me to believe she is engaged to him," replied George dolefully.

"Youse got powerful 'magination, Georgie, an' I reckon dat 'magination read moah ob dat lettah dan you real eyes did. Can't fool dis heah ole niggah, George, I'se got what de woman folks call 'tuition, an' dat 'tuition tells me a lot ob tings dat you wouldn't dream ob. I'se ready to put my 'tuition agin' you 'magination any day, Georgie."

George felt comforted by the old negro's sympathy, but he failed to acknowledge to himself the correctness of Pete's 'tuition as compared to his own supposed 'magination.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ARMY.

George Brandon had eaten but little for several days, slept less, and been excused from attending all of his classes. He was lying on his bed endeavoring to make up his mind what course to take. It seemed impossible to pursue his studies in his present state of mind.

"Hello Brandon, how are you feeling?" greeted a junior student as he pushed open the door, and without waiting for a reply burst out with, "Heard the news about the declaration of war against Spain by the United States over the blowing up of the Maine in Cuban waters, and the Spanish oppression in Cuba?"

"No," said George, springing up from the bed.

"Well it's a fact, the regular army is all ready for war and taking in recruits as fast as it can, and the National Guards are being called out; going in the war as volunteers. Recruits are flocking by the thousands to the Guard's headquarters. Company H, 71st N. Y. Infantry has already struck tents on Hempstead Plains near Mineola. They are preparing the way for all of the New York and Brooklyn troops. They will all be camped there soon and ready for drill and field maneuvering. I've a notion to join the army myself."

The junior student left the room and hurried to the rooms of other students to spread the news of the war.

"The army! the army!" almost shouted George as he thought of joining the army as a means of drowning out his love for Carrie. "A soldier's life in a war campaign will be just the thing to help overcome my love; action, something tremendously exciting, hazardous work, that is the thing, something to keep my mind occupied, on the

alert. Yes I'll join the army. I'll risk my life, what is my life without her anyway? I'll work for promotion too, I'll rise, rise, rise, become a general maybe."

In a few days George Brandon had settled his accounts with the principal and left the school, no one knew where he had gone, except Pete, whom George had told, and who pleaded in vain with the young man to remain in school.

One day soon after George's departure Miss Carlton sat alone on a bench under a big ox-heart cherry tree back of the Academy building. Pete came walking along and noticing a rather sad look on Miss Carlton's usually bright features, cautiously approached her. Now he could see that her eyes were moist from weeping.

"Miss Carrie, I'se beg you pawdon, but dis heah ole colored man knows a heap by 'tuition. You seems to be in troubles and I'se de fellah what's ready an' willin' to help anybody dat my good young Massah Georgie likes. I happen to know dat he moah dan likes you, he love you wid his whole heart, he done 'bout gone crazy 'cause he's got a 'magination what make a big mistake, he got de idee dat youse love anoder man, what's way 'cross de ocean in de Dutchman's country. He's done gone an' jined de army out on Hempstead Plains; 'cause he thinks de fightin' will make his 'magination stop thinkin' bout you. He say his life am not wuth much any way widout youse, an' he done don't keer if he do git killed in de battle."

Miss Carlton rose quickly and fairly ran to her room in the Academy, not, however, till she had frankly said "Thank you Pete," to the old colored janitor.

"I'se reckon I'se done fixed it dis time; tellin' her 'bout Georgie's discompture. She'll go right away to de

Linkum sodgers an' fine Georgie shuah now, 'else dis heah niggah's 'tuition am no 'count," reasoned Pete, with considerable satisfaction, as he walked to the furnace room to get some coal for the kitchen range.

"Carrie Carlton's old love for George Brandon had not been rekindled, there was no necessity for a rekindling, for it had never died down. She possessed a wonderful will power, and had succeeded in mastering her emotions to such an extent all of these years that she was enabled to pursue her education. She had almost given up hope of ever meeting him again, for she reasoned that he must have found another, or he certainly would have answered her letters. Still, at times, she intuitively divined that Lawrence Cowden had something to do with George's not answering her letters, but just in what way was not clear to her mind. She placed but little faith in Lawrence's account, in his letter to her, of George's attentions to Rose Cowden. When George appeared at the Academy as a student she had had considerable difficulty in controlling her emotions. She soon became aware that George either still loved her, or that the old love was being awakened in his heart by his daily association with her. Still she felt she should not be too precipitate in her acceptance of his attentions, but to gradually lead him on, till a psychological moment arrived for a closer relationship between them.

But now, she was sorely distressed over George's evident neglectfulness of his studies, and his absence from her presence. She feared something had happened to cause him to feel that she cared for him only in a friendly way, though just what that something was she could not discern. She wished now that she had made her feelings a

little plainer to him, still she thought she had given plenty of room for hope.

When she received the news from Pete, of George's departure for the purpose of joining the army, and that he believed she loved a man in "de Dutchman's country," she felt a great remorse. What man could he think she loved that was in the Dutchman's country? Then the thought flashed through her mind that Pete meant Germany, not the Netherlands, and it must be Mr. Terry he referred to. But what reason had George to think she loved Mr. Terry. To be sure she and Mr. Terry had graduated in the same class at college, and they were on friendly terms both at college and as members of the Academy faculty last year, but they were not on intimate terms, had not even corresponded with each other when he went to Germany to study the modern languages.

She put on her hat and left the Academy building for a walk, she started for the little village post-office, she intended enquiring about the troops encamped at Hempstead Plains. On her way she caught up with the janitor's little boy who greeted her smilingly, "How do Miss Cawltton, I'se gwine to de store to buy some watermillion. Do you 'spose I kin buy one wid a dime?" and he held up a little black hand with a dime clutched between his fore finger and thumb.

"If the dime won't buy a great big watermelon, I will give you enough money that will buy one, Moses," said Miss Carlton encouragingly.

"Thank you, Miss Cawltton, youse de bes' lady at de 'Cademy, an' I'se willin' to do anything for youse."

"Where did you get the dime Moses?" enquired "de bes' lady at de 'Cademy," curiously.

"Massa George Brandon gib it to me fo' taken dat lettah to youse, Miss Cawlton."

"But I thought you said you found the letter," said the lady more curious than ever.

"To tell de truf, Miss Cawlton, I'se didn' fine de lettah 'tall, Massa George fine it, and tell me say dat I'se fine it."

"Oh!" came involuntarily from the lady as she seemed to be endeavoring to catch her breath.

"But you should not tell an untruth, Moses," she continued, admonishingly, "you should have told me that Mr. Brandon found it."

"I'se don't tell untrufts generally, Miss Cawlton," reasoned Moses, "but when Massa George says to tell a untruf, I'se reckon de untruf am all right, cause Massa George am all right; papa says he's all right. I'se reckon dis heah special untruf am a big 'ception to de general ones."

"Well we will get the big watermelon anyway, the biggest one we can find," said the lady enthusiastically.

"That's what did it," mused Miss Carlton, as she hurried along the graveled road, little Moses being obliged to keep up a half trot in order to keep by her side. "He saw the postmark of Jena on the envelope, and some one must have misinformed him in regard to Mr. Terry; Mr. Pen-nock, probably. But if Georgie had read the letter he would have seen his mistake, but of course he would not read a letter that did not belong to him, still he had no right to jump at conclusions so quickly, that is not like Georgie, he usually reflects before coming to a decision on a question with so meagre a basis on which to speculate."

On arriving at the little village she purchased the largest watermelon she could find, ordered it sent to the Academy

for little Moses, paying for the melon herself, telling the boy to keep his dime for future use. After gaining all of the information she could from the postmistress and the station agent in regard to the troops encamped on the Island, she returned to her room at the Academy, took the letter, which had caused so much trouble, from her trunk and as she drew the letter from the envelope she noticed, before unfolding the paper, the same sentence about the "little word" that George had read.

"Oh! I see," and a light dawned upon her mind, "he did take the letter from its envelope, read just this one sentence and then replaced it. No doubt he had not the heart to read further. I see quite clearly now. He supposed Mr. Terry wrote that letter. If he had read the whole letter he would have discovered his mistake; he would have seen that it was my brother Walter who wrote that, thanking me for the little word I casually dropped to Laura Bennett. Walter loved Laura, but he was such a poor hand at courting that I fear he never would have plucked up courage enough to have proposed to her, if I had not made it known to her by that "little word," that Walter was in love with her. It was a delicate affair, he being my brother, and she being one of my best girl friends, but it worked all right."

"Oh! I must go to the army encampment, by all means, and look for Georgie. It's an awful thing to do, but no time must be lost, he must be told of his mistake. I'll go to Bound Brook right away and get Walter to go with me. Walter and Laura are at their new home in New Jersey by this time." And Miss Carlton hurriedly made the necessary preparations for the new venture. She told the principal that she was called home unexpectedly, and he chose one of the senior students to take her classes during

her absence. Taking a train to New York, she crossed the Hudson by ferry, and was soon on a New Jersey Central west-bound passenger. Arriving at Bound Brook, she went to her brother's home, told him of her plans, and a little of what had transpired, and in a short time she and Walter Carlton were on an east-bound train for New York. It was too late to go out to the army camp on Long Island, so they remained over night at the old home near River Side Drive.

The next morning they arrived at Mineola, and walked out to the encampment on Hempstead Plains. There were over ten thousand troops already in camp. Rows of tents everywhere, soldiers drilling by squads, by platoons, by companies, by battalions, by regiments, and by brigades. Some in close order, others deployed in a long skirmish line. At one end of the large parade ground a whole brigade was preparing to charge an imaginary enemy. Officers were giving commands; some in quick, jerky words, others in drawling tones, to their men. Buglers were sounding regimental or brigade commands. Field officers along the skirmish lines were using shrill little whistles as a means for giving certain commands to the ever attentive soldiers. Couriers and orderlies were dashing here and there across the Plains, their horses at full speed. Drums were beating, flags waving in the breeze, shots were being fired by volleys and at will from guns containing blank cartridges.

"We had best wait till the soldiers are ordered back to their tents, we can never find George in all of this hub-bub," advised Walter as the two stood on a prominent rise in the ground watching the practice drill of the troops preparing themselves for active campaigning wherever they might be sent.

Miss Carlton scanned the face of every soldier and officer she could see, in case, by chance, she should recognize George as one of those blue-coated army men. But she saw no one that looked exactly like George, though she was surprized at the fact that she saw several who bore some resemblance to him.

At last the soldiers all returned to their respective company camps, and then began the search for George Brandon in earnest. She imagined all of the horrors of battle as they searched regiment after regiment. To think of Georgie charging the Spaniards away off in Cuba, or the Philippines, or, perhaps, in Spain itself, being shot down by a cruel Mauser bullet, left wounded and bleeding to death on the field of battle; all because she had been over-cautious in making known to him the true state of her feelings; or was Mr. Pennock or some one else to blame for misinforming him in regard to her relations with Mr. Terry? She felt faint as she realized the possibility of such a scene, but she kept up her courage, and walked with her brother from camp to camp, enquiring of the officers, and searching among the soldiers.

"Oh! Walter," she exclaimed, "I read that Fred Grant, son of old General Grant, was Colonel of the 14th N. Y. Infantry. Let's go to the 14th. George very likely would join that regiment in order to serve under the command of General Grant's son. He was a great admirer of Grant."

They went to the 14th N. Y., but no Georgie could be found, though one of the officers did seem to remember a recruit as having answered to George's description.

"Perhaps the recruiting officer or the surgeon will remember," politely suggested the officer, and he forthwith enquired of those officials.

"Yes," he said, when he returned from the surgeon's tent, "a George Brandon was among the recruits, but he failed to pass the examination, he had at one time sustained an injury to one of his feet, which in the surgeon's opinion, might trouble him on a long march, so he was turned down."

"Where did he go?" asked Miss Carlton anxiously.

"I am sorry, but we have no way of knowing," answered the officer politely.

"Where could he have gone, Walter?" she urged pleadingly.

"I don't know Carrie, maybe he returned to Kansas, maybe he has entered another preparatory school, it is difficult to tell just what he would do under the circumstances. But you look tired and weary, Carrie, come on back with me to Bound Brook and rest a bit," suggested Walter, as they left the encampment to walk to the station at Mineola.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MISSION.

The evening Carrie and Walter returned to the thriving town of Bound Brook from their unsuccessful search for George Brandon among the troops at Hempstead Plains, the rain came down in torrents. Carrie's form lay prostrate on the bed in her room. The rain was beating mercilessly against the window pane, but the girl heard it not, her face was buried in her pillow; she was weeping—weeping quietly; though all of the pent up passions in her heart had burst their bounds, she was not sobbing, just quietly weeping till the pillow became drenched with tears. At last she raised her head, endeavored to dry her tear-stained eyes with her handkerchief, rested her weary head on another pillow and wept again, until she fell asleep from sheer exhaustion.

George Brandon, after failing in his attempt to join the 14th N. Y. Infantry, left the army encampment more disconsolate than ever.

"What next?" was the question that ran through his mind over and over, with no plausible answer in view, as he walked to the station at Mineola.

"They seem to be mighty particular in their examination of recruits. I'll guarantee that I can out walk the average soldier on a march any day, if I did get my foot broken years ago in a fall while riding that wild Texas pony out in Kansas. My foot never troubles me now days, though I've walked many a mile at a stretch on the upland prairie in southern Kansas. It was all a theory which that surgeon acted on, but theory and practice do not always coincide, especially when the theory is not based on actual

experience. Of course he reasoned that a man whose foot was once broken would naturally be liable to give out in a long march. But if he had allowed that theory to be modified by my statement that the injured foot had not troubled me once of late years, though I had marched more miles in a day than ever is allotted to a regiment of soldiers even when on a forced march, my name would now have been enrolled on the company roster as Private George Brandon. And I'll warrant that it would not have been long before it would have been Corporal Brandon, then Sergeant Brandon, and lastly, at least, Lieutenant Brandon."

Thus he soliloquized as he made his way to the station just in time to catch the train for Long Island City. He had not as yet decided on any particular course to follow, but the west-bound train standing at the station, and the engineer ringing the bell as a sign that the train was about to pull out, he entered one of the passenger coaches with no very distinct idea as to where he was bound for. Soon he found himself walking the streets of New York, still unable to decide what to do or where to go. His walk brought him to the Hudson river, and seeing no necessity of calling a halt, he crossed the river on a ferry to Jersey City. He went to the ticket office of the New Jersey Central to purchase a ticket to—he could not decide where.

"Where are you going?" enquired the ticket agent, wondering why the young man stood staring into space so absent mindedly.

"I don't know," truthfully came the answer; it was the only answer he could give, he appeared lost in a busy world of which it seemed he had no part.

"He'll think I am crazy if I act this way," thought

George as he turned away. "Maybe I am crazy," and he actually smiled—a sarcastic smile it was too, for life in this world seemed bitter to him.

At the Academy George had made friends with Charles Brown, a senior student from Plainfield. Young Brown was one of the most promising of all of the Academy students, but his eye-sight was poor, in fact he was obliged to quit school for a while in order to give his eyes a rest. Both Brown and George were interested in the natural sciences, and the latter had gained considerable information in advance of his daily lessons from his new friend. George hoped thereby to double up in some of his studies and at least make the four-year course in three years. Brown had gone to George for sympathy in his worry over his poor eye-sight, and George had found sympathy from Brown in the rather embarrassing fact of his advanced age as compared with the ages of the other students of his class year.

"I'll go to Charlie Brown's," thought George, as he boarded an N. J. C. west-bound commuter's train. "I won't tell him of my love affair, but Charlie will know something is wrong, though he won't ask, but will act the good old chum that he is, and make me feel at home."

Arriving at the beautiful little suburban city of Plainfield, George walked into the brick depot of English style of architecture, descended the stone steps to the underground passage to the newly built stone depot of the most up-to-date style of modern architecture, situated on the opposite side of the track. The new depot was used for passengers taking trains for New York, while the old one was used for west-bound passengers. George walked through to the rear of the depot, descended the stone steps to the well-paved street, then walked to the Brown's resi-

dence a dozen blocks away. Entering the old-fashioned brick house, he was soon conversing with his friend.

Charlie Brown's eyes were so poorly that he was obliged to remain in a somewhat darkened room. George, the next day, took a walk alone. It was his custom to walk when something was troubling his mind. He walked through the business section of the city to North Plainfield, thence down Somerset Street to the "Notch," a natural pass in the Watchung range of mountains back of the city. He ascended the winding mountain road known as Johnson's Drive to the top of the mountain, from whence he could get a fine view of the city and the Atlantic plain. Then he half slid, half ran, and half tumbled down the steep side of the mountain to the bottom of the Notch, walked along Stony Brook, passed the old-fashioned inn situated in the Notch near the scenic Wetumpka Falls, until he came to the little village of Washingtonville situated in the beautiful Washington Valley; so named from the fact that George Washington and his army once marched up the valley. George sat on a stone fence under the boughs of an old apple tree, and tried to think of the patriotic scenes which must have taken place in this very valley. But poor George was not in a patriotic mood, and soon retraced his steps to the city and re-entered Brown's brick residence feeling somewhat relieved of his troubles, though his heart was still heavy as lead, but the walk had given him an appetite for food, and had made him tired enough to sleep during the greater part of the night.

"Another walk like the one I took yesterday, and maybe I'll feel better and be able to decide on some course to follow in life," thought George as he started out for another walk the next morning.

"Take the trolley to Bound Brook, George," Charlie had said at the breakfast table, "and walk to Chimney Rock and Buttermilk Falls in the mountains back of the town, and you will see some fine mountain scenery."

George took the trolley to Bound Brook, walked to the mountains back of town, ascended the winding stony road to the top, where a huge rock, in shape not unlike an immense old-fashioned Colonial chimney towered high in the air, still standing sentinel, as it had done for hundreds of years, over the forest-clad mountains, and the deep narrow valleys below, through one of which plunged the Buttermilk Falls.

"Yes, this is fine," said George appreciatively, "but I wish Carrie was by my side." He had no sooner uttered the words than he heard the tramping of feet on the fallen leaves on the opposite side of the rock. He stepped aside a little in order to see who was coming. His face grew pale and red by turns as he realized that there coming toward him were a young man and two young ladies, one of the latter of which he instantly recognized as Carrie Carlton.

Carrie, too, became excited, but she was the first to regain composure, and coming forward said, "Good morning, George, this is my brother Walter and his wife, Mrs. Laura Carlton. No doubt you scarcely recognize in this man the Walter Carlton you used to know in Kansas."

"Yes, I see now that he is the same Walter that used to herd sheep on the prairie south of the East-branch, but I would not have known him at first sight," said George shaking hands with all of the new arrivals.

"Let's walk down to Buttermilk Falls," suggested Walter, purposely leading the way with his wife. George and Carrie followed closely behind. Walter and Mrs. Carlton

purposely kept up a rapid conversation as they descended the mountain side to the valley below. George and Carrie followed in silence, neither knew how to break the ice, or what to say, though they were both thinking very hard without arriving at a suitable subject for conversation for just this particular occasion. The occasion was an unexpected one for two young lovers each of whom had just previously arrived at the conclusion that they would not see each other again.

"Fine scenery around here," at last ventured George by way of gaining courage.

"Very fine indeed," answered the other, at the same time much dissatisfied with such an answer.

"That was quite a rock up there on top," was the commonplace remark that came from Carrie when they were half way down the side of the mountain.

"Yes it was," replied George, all the while racking his brain for a better answer.

"Holding a Quaker meeting back there?" mischievously asked Walter looking over his shoulder at the silent couple in the rear.

"Yes," replied George trying to smile.

"Most time to break meeting and talk isn't it?" suggested Walter after another lapse of silence by the couple in the rear.

"Never mind about our meeting, Walter," replied Carrie, trying to laugh lightly.

George was trying hard to bring up the past—anything would do that would break the ice, but the harder he thought the less he could think of. His mind seemed to be a vacuum, he could feel, but could not express those feelings in words.

Carrie was undergoing a similar experience. Thus the

two followed in silence. Arriving at the falls, they all stood watching the foaming, seething water pour over the rocks into a deep clear pool below. Fish were swimming in the pool.

"Do you suppose we could catch one of those big fish with a crooked pin attached to a cord, Carrie?" ventured George so boldly that by the time the words were out of his mouth he was actually frightened at his own boldness, and wished he had held his tongue, for what business had he trying to bring up old recollections when Carrie was engaged to Mr. Terry of Jena, Germany.

"We might try if I could find a pin, Georgie, but I have no pins with me this time. There should be an owl sitting on that limb yonder blinking wisely, as wisely as Socrates himself, whom you once declared must have been a president of the United States," answered Carrie, equal to the occasion.

George wondered why she appeared so willing to talk reminiscently of old times, when she surely ought to know that it would only cause him pain in the face of the fact that she would probably some day be married to a Prof. Terry. He was still wondering when he noticed that Walter and Laura had disappeared.

Carrie also became aware of this fact about this time, and looking around in some surprise asked, "Where did Walter and Laura go?"

"I guess they went to that heavy piece of woods yonder across the brook," replied George; but it was only a guess, for he hadn't the slightest idea where they had gone.

"Hadn't we better go there too?" suggested Carrie.

"Yes," assented George. That was just what he wanted, to get in the shade of the trees; he could think better among the green foliage of the trees than in the open.

While they were crossing the brook, and following a small path to the woods, Carrie was thinking.

"I suppose by rights I should tell Georgie all about it. I hunted nearly all one day among the soldiers on Hempstead Plains for this very opportunity, and cried myself to sleep that night because I thought that that opportunity was lost. Now that I have the opportunity I seem powerless to say one word, I simply can not break the ice. If he will only keep referring to the past I may be able to bring about a disclosure of the true state of affairs."

"Let's sit down on this log, Carrie, and rest; to tell the truth I don't know where Walter and Mrs. Carlton went. We may as well wait here a while anyway."

Carrie sat down beside him on the log without a word.

"Oh! look at those pretty birds with the pretty yellow tipped wing feathers, Georgie; what kind of birds are they? I never saw that kind before."

"They are cedar waxwings, Carrie. Notice the crest on their heads? Looks a little like the crest of a cardinal or western red-bird, don't it?" tested George again.

"Yes," answered Carrie simply, mental visions of a little scene of by-gone days that occurred in a piece of woods in southern Kansas coming before her mind.

"Do you care to be reminded of those by-gone days, Carrie?" said George risking all in his endeavor to find out once for all if there was a possibility of a rekindling of that old love, even if she was supposed to be engaged to another. He was becoming desperate. Fate had brought them together once more, and he intended to take advantage of it and learn his own fate in full if possible.

"Yes," came her answer, a little tremulously.

"Why does she say yes, if a spark of love has not been rekindled? Surely she would say no, if she still loves



"See Carrie, the red-bird is singing to cheer us up."

Mr. Terry," reasoned George, trying to cogitate, in his mind, another leading question.

"I do wish there was not such a social barrier between us, Carrie," said George leadingly.

"What do you mean by social barrier, Georgie?" she answered barely able to keep back the tears.

"Why Carrie dear—I mean that if I had the educational training, and the financial standing that you have, I—I—I'd," here a lump came into his throat and choked the words he intended should follow.

Carrie came to the rescue with, "Georgie, you surely know, you ought to know, that I do not consider that my educational training and financial standing as forming a barrier in any way between you and me." She was almost in tears when she had finished this sentence.

At this juncture a scarlet tanager alighted on a low branch of a near-by pin oak, and began to sing.

"Georgie, don't you know that there is no barrier of any kind between us?" she said, tears coming to her eyes.

"Never mind, Carrie dear," said George soothingly as he put one arm around her and drew her head to his shoulder. "See, Carrie, the red-bird is singing to cheer us up."

"It was the Tanager's Mission to bring us together again, dear Georgie," said Carrie as he took both her hands in his.

"Yes, thank God for that western red-bird, and thank God for this eastern red-bird, and may nothing part us again," said George almost prayerfully.

"Nothing shall part us again in this world," she answered confidently.

A CUP AND A GIRL

OR

A Girl of the Northwest

By

STACY ALVAN BROWN

P R E F A C E

Realizing from experience and observation that there are, in most of our lives, distinct turning points; and especially is there a psychological moment in the life of a young person, when despite previous training, one is liable to grasp certain outside influences, and in the name of independence, sometimes adopt new views of life and therefore take new walks in life, I write the following story in the hope that certain morals will be brought out with such force to the mind as to be an influence for good.

My characters in the story, though intended to be true to life, and may have their counterparts in real life, are nevertheless purely imaginative.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface	134
Chapter I.—Jake Landis.....	135
Chapter II.—The Two Friends.....	141
Chapter III.—The Bensons.....	145
Chapter IV.—A Promise	149
Chapter V.—The Two Letters.....	155
Chapter VI.—Lost	160
Chapter VII.—The Walk	167
Chapter VIII.—The Trip.....	171
Chapter IX.—New York City.....	178
Chapter X.—Sam Howell	182
Chapter XI.—On the Sound.....	186
Chapter XII.—A Street Episode	192
Chapter XIII.—The Wedding	199
Chapter XIV.—The Dropped Letter	204
Chapter XV.—The Club Championship Cup.....	208
Chapter XVI.—Canadian Citizens	212
Conclusion	216

CHAPTER I.

JAKE LANDIS.

A gentle breeze was being wafted over a section of one of Canada's northwest provinces. One could hear the rustle of the silvery green leaves of the poplars, and the quack, quack of the mallards in a nearby pond, while not far distant a big black cat was stealthily creeping toward a striped spermophile, locally known as a gopher. The gopher, ignorant of the coming danger, sat straight up gnawing at a kernel of wheat.

On a log in front of a rather substantially built frame house sat a young man watching the cat and gopher, but soon tired of the former's cautious and slow movements, he allowed his steel gray eyes to rest their gaze on a conveniently situated clump of willow bushes, while his mind became deep in thought.

The steel gray eyes might indicate a man of foresight and quick wit, the little too prominent nose, push and energy, the receding chin an unprincipled character, while the large, shapely forehead showed a more than ordinary amount of intelligence. The sharp contrast between the prominent nose and the receding chin produced the effect of irregular features, which, however, was partly atoned for by the intelligent looking forehead surmounted by a crop of light brown hair. From a full face view he might be counted fairly good looking, but a profile view revealed all of the inharmonies of his features.

Jacob Landis, or "Jake," as he was more commonly called, was still a young man, in good health, and of a strong physical build.

He had come from the States six years before, taken up a homestead, purchased an adjoining quarter section of



—he allowed his steel gray eyes to rest their gaze on a conveniently situated clump of willow bushes.

land, and with his four oxen had broken out the greater part of the half section, a feat of no little accomplishment, though some say the oxen deserved more credit than he, for he did the yelling, to which neighbors over a mile away could testify to having heard while lying in their beds early in the morning waiting for Jake's alarm yells—and the poor oxen did the pulling and took the whip lashing, while big, strong Jake Landis took the credit.

"You are working your oxen too hard," some kindly neighbor would venture to say.

"Can't be helped," Jake would reply, "this field has got to be plowed this summer; if it isn't I can't make ends meet, and the oxen, well, if they give out I'll turn 'em loose on pea vine to fatten for the market, and buy more oxen."

And so Jake made ends meet and made money in the bargain, and was called a hustler.

Jake was ambitious, which in itself may not be a bad trait; but Jake's ambition was not always guarded by good principle. When Jake said he would do a thing, he would do it, and he wanted people to understand that he would do it. When Jake said, "I'm going to be councilor," he fully intended to be, notwithstanding the fact that in his first two political campaigns he was defeated.

Jake was also an opportunist, and when a young Englishman from the city whose homestead happened to be in the center of the municipal* division became discouraged and homesick and wanted to sell, Jake bought him out and moved his bachelor belongings to the new acquisition.

*A rural municipality in the Canadian Northwest corresponds to some extent to a county in the States. The municipality is divided into divisions, each division usually embracing a township and a half. From each division is elected, annually, a councilor, whose duties may correspond in some degree to those of a township supervisor in the States.

"Now," declared Jake, "I'm in the center of the division and am just the man for councilor, because being in the center I am more likely to administer to all alike and show no partiality."

The opposing candidate, though a most worthy man, had the misfortune to live at one side of the division. His supporters endeavored to preach the entirely sane and reasonable idea that a man, if he were a good man, would be impartial in performing his official duties whether he be in the center or at one side of the division. But Jake, by a promise here and a threat there, and by enthusiastically and somewhat loudly declaring that the man in the center is the man for the office, finally succeeded in convincing a majority of the voters by his rather flimsy argument. And when the ballots were counted it was found that Jake had received a majority of two votes.

Hitherto Jake had worked hard and effectively against the organization of a school district, but now that he had acquired a piece of land situated in the center of the proposed school district, he suddenly reversed his ideas in regard to the organization of school districts.

"Boys," he said to a lot of bachelors one Sunday afternoon, "*before* the country was too new for schools, but now it possesses more wealth and it's high time for a school."

And there was a school, and the schoolhouse was built in one corner of Jake's new farm, thereby enhancing its value.

Jake, to the ordinary observer, was only a rough, loud, good-natured chap, ready for a bit of fun or whatever might come, always had a word for everybody, and at times showed a disposition to be extremely generous. Most people liked him, except now and then a man—and the number of such men seemed to be steadily on the increase—who had had business dealings with him and got the

worst end of the bargain. A few keen observers were able to see through the screen of joviality into his real character.

The minister always spoke highly of Jake, and Jake was very careful to be particularly sociable to the minister, always attended church service, and was one of the heaviest contributors to the financial support of the church, even going through the neighborhood taking up subscriptions for the church. Some people even thought Jake quite religious, but those who had had the opportunity to hear Jake's outburst of irreligious oratory when driving oxen, invariably looked around to see if any ladies were within hearing, and wondered if he was the same Jake who jingled the money into the collection plate at church.

Although Jake had not held the office of councilor many months, he was already contemplating and planning for a seat in the provincial parliament.

"If," said he to his best friend, easy going, good natured John Pence, "too many rate payers in this municipality get sore on me before I run for member of parliament, I can get out and canvass in the other parts of the district where they don't know me so well, and get a majority of votes anyway."

Yes, Jake felt sure of the M. P. P.* But what perplexed and troubled Jake's mind most was a problem that had not to do with the getting of votes, or the making of money. It was a girl problem. He confided to John Pence that he didn't believe in love as most people did. He didn't believe in sentimental love, blind love; he believed in using common sense in the choosing of a girl for a wife, but that if he really ever did love, he loved little Ella Benson. He wasn't sure that it was love, no he hardly thought it was,

*Member of provincial parliament.

he had too much common sense, but still he had mighty queer feelings about that girl, a sort of a warming up, he said, that he couldn't quite account for.

When John Pence tried to assure him that that queer feeling was really love, Jake would reply, "Nonsense, man, nonsense, Jake Landis isn't such a silly man." Still he wanted Ella Benson to love him. He was not sure that she loved him. He did believe that she had loved him, but lately she acted strangely toward him. When he called at the Benson homestead Ella invariably ran into her room before he entered the doorway, and would not come out while he remained in the house, except when he staid for the evening meal—which he usually did—when she was obliged to come out to set the table and prepare the meal, and then she would scarcely speak to him.

"Maybe," suggested the thoughtful John, "she knows you are runnin' around with those girls over east and is jealous."

But Jake didn't agree with John's view of the case, he was endowed with the singular idea that when girls say "no" they mean "yes," and that the only thing to do was to press onward, persevere, persist, insist, persuade, coerce; any or all of these methods might be used to win the fair lady. Such were the thoughts that were succeeding each other in rapid succession in Jake's fertile brain as he sat on the log looking steadily at the willow bushes, yet not seeing the bushes at all. After a hopeless intermingling of thoughts on such subjects as "How to get to Parliament," "Common sense love," "Making money," "Ella Benson's strange actions," he suddenly began chuckling to himself, frightening away the gopher just as the black cat was about to spring on its intended prey.

CHAPTER II.

THE TWO FRIENDS.

"What's up now?" said John Pence as he strode round a corner of the house.

"Hello there, John," welcomed Jake, looking up from his reverie.

"But what was so funny as to make you laugh when alone?" inquired John.

"Well, I'll tell you, but mum's the word," answered Jake, slapping at a bloodthirsty mosquito that had settled on the end of his nose.

"All right, mum's the word," acquiesced John.

"Well, you know that bunch of cattle the big Swede and I bought at a bargain price?"

"Yes," drawled John.

"Well, you see, the two best looking heifers have the tuberculosis and I could see it. The Swede and I were to divide the bunch between us. Well, I told him to take his choice of the heifers and I'd take my choice of the steers. I knew he'd pick the best looking ones and get the two consumptive ones, and he did. 'Now,' said I to the Swede, 'don't you put up a kick or blame me for anything if anything happens to your cattle.' He said he wouldn't, but I could see he looked a little suspicious, thought something must be wrong, but it was too late to back out after he had made his own choice."

"How's Ella?" asked John, who was more interested in Jake's love than his business affairs.

"Same as usual," thoughtfully answered Jake.

"See here, Jake," said John seriously, "why don't you let Ella go, and go for Cora Baker, she's a big, strong girl, used to milking cows and even runs a mower and I heard

she could run a binder. Ella is delicate and refined and wants an education; she's too good for you anyway."

John Pence was one of the few men who could talk very plain and to the point with Jake without arousing the latter's ire.

"I don't care a d—n, that's just the kind of a wife I want, one who is educated and naturally refined. Ella Benson is just the girl to be the wife of a member of parliament or a cabinet officer, or—well, you can't tell, I might be a premier and be knighted yet."

John said nothing, but mused thoughtfully over Jake's self-accredited possibilities, wondering if in the end Jake would aspire to being a king, and if he did, he'd *be* a king, and probably, in that case, he—John Pence; poor homesteader, living in a tiny, dirty log shack, possessor of one hundred and sixty acres of land covered for the most part by willow bush, and one team of broken-down oxen once owned by Jake, might aspire to being the king's coachman, which position he felt would be far more desirable than his present position in life.

"What's that noise in the house?" asked John, looking up in surprise.

"Jumping Jimminy," roared Jake, hastily getting up from the log and running toward the house, "that's my kettle of soup boiling over—come in, John, and have dinner."

In due time the two bachelor friends, so different from each other in disposition, were seated at the table partaking of beef soup, boiled potatoes, and bread, the last named article of food Jake called "hard-tack."

Strange why these two were such fast friends: the one arbitrary, imperious, masterful; the other carelessly indifferent to his own advancement financially or socially.

Jake Landis liked John Pence, because the latter was outspoken, yet willing to acknowledge Jake as his superior. John Pence admired Jake chiefly because the latter confided to him most of his secrets.

"I'll tell you what," said Jake, bringing his powerful fist down on the table with such force as to set all of the dishes in motion, upsetting a portion of John's hot soup into his lap, calling forth a few rather forcible remarks from that worthy gentleman, "I'll make Ella come to time yet, I'll marry her or bust, and she shall apologize for her shabby treatment of me."

"I'll bust you if you spill any more hot soup on my legs," retorted John, getting up from the table and trying to wring the hot soup out of his trousers' legs.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I implore you to forgive me for my rash and hasty demonstrations," laughed Jake.

"Well, don't say another word about that Ella Benson till we get through eating," commanded John.

"Just as you say, old chap," generously acquiesced Jake. And so the two bachelor chums fell to, to dispose of great quantities of hot soup, boiled potatoes and "bannock," or bachelors' bread.

In a very short time, however, Jake spoke up, "Say, John, I've got the old folks, I mean her uncle and aunt, on my side."

"I told you not to say another word about that girl till after dinner," interposed John.

"Beg pardon," said Jake, "but please let me say just a half dozen more words on the subject."

"Well, I was going to say that I put up a pitiful tale of a bachelor's hard lot in keeping house and doing farm work too, and I especially emphasize the loneliness of a bachelor's life, and Ella's Aunt Jane fairly melts and tears come

to her eyes, and you know I made her Uncle Warren road-boss."

"Good for you," said John, taking another plateful of potatoes.

"I've got another idea," said Jake, as he finished his second plate of soup.

"Out with it," responded John, without looking up from his efforts at mashing a half-cooked potato.

"Well, here goes," said Jake, straightening up in his chair preparatory to giving a final solution of his girl problem. "You see, we've got to get a teacher for our school, and as I am one of the trustees, and one of the other two trustees will do anything I say, I'll simply ask Ella Benson to teach the school, and I'll see to it that she gets a big, fat salary too, and that will be a feather in my cap, she'll come to time then, ha! ha! that's the way I'll win her."

"Maybe," replied John, who had some misgivings as to Jake's ability to win a rather wilful girl in that way.

"You don't know me yet, John," said Jake, noticing the doubtful look in his friend's face. "I'll get that girl if I've got to go to the ends of the earth for her."

"Well, so long, and success to you," said John, preparing to depart. "I've got to hunt up my oxen and rake up some hay yet this afternoon."

"Be good to yourself and come round again," answered Jake, as he began piling the dirty dishes up to await the daily dish washing in the evening.

CHAPTER III.

THE BENSONS.

About two miles from the new Landis acquisition stood the Benson house, a well built but low log house containing three rooms and a cellar. To the front of the house a beautiful flower garden was artistically arranged, indicating some one about with an æsthetic turn of mind. Three little girls were in the back yard making mud pies. In the stable yard three little boys were trying to hitch a yearling steer to a little home-made wagon, the wheels of which were made from a poplar log. The young steer hitched, the boys got in the wagon and the driver gave the steer a poke with a stick, at the same time letting out a yell resembling, as he thought, the war whoop of a Sioux Indian. Evidently the steer thought there was a whole tribe of Indians behind it, for with its tail up in the air and with a bellow, away went the frightened animal, and turning suddenly to avoid a collision with a poplar tree the wagon was upset, and the boys were sent sprawling on the ground. The oldest boy managed to climb on the upturned wagon which was being dragged at a rapid rate over stumps, two of the wheels having come off and gone rolling down the side of a knoll. The runaway made for the house, nearly running over the three little girls, who ran screaming, and as the steer turned a corner of the house the driver was knocked off the wagon, then right into the flower garden plunged the steer, uprooting and breaking off many of the choicest flowers.

The noise of the bellowing steer, screaming girls and hilarious boys brought a girl of about nineteen out of the house in a hurry. With the help of the boys, all of whom

had come up by this time, she caught and unhitched the steer. After mildly scolding the boys, who marched off with the frisky steer to the stable in high glee over their adventure, the girl looked at the damage done to her cherished flowers.

"My beautiful flowers," she sighed, "after spending all of my spare moments in getting them to grow, then have them torn up this way." But she was too practical to "cry over spilled milk," and after comforting the frightened little girls, and assuring her invalid aunt that nothing very serious had happened, she returned to her room and resumed looking at a magazine. This magazine contained pictures of groups of college and seminary girls, campus scenes, etc. As she looks at these pictures with ever growing interest, we see that she is a small, delicate looking girl. She possessed a good forehead showing great intelligence, and wore a large amount of flaxen hair; her eyes were a pretty, almost a dreamy, blue that looked out from under long eyelashes, and her lips were thin, but set in such a way as to denote firmness and will power. Her whole appearance gave one the impression of a girl possessing great decision of character, one who could in the face of adverse circumstances make firm resolves and have force of character enough to carry them out. She was pretty, but back of every feature of her prettiness could be seen intellectual power and stability of character. Moreover, she had a quiet, unobtrusive way about her that gave one, when in her presence, a feeling of quiet rest, a peaceful serenity, which made one want to see her again.

Mr. and Mrs. Benson with their eight children and niece had come from Ontario to their homestead four years previous. They were in poor financial circumstances when they arrived, and had experienced a rather tough time pioneering during these four years of homestead life. The

two oldest boys, to be sure, were nearly grown and helped their father with the farm work, but so many children to clothe and feed, the cost of doctor bills for the invalid mother, took away the profits of farming.

Ella's father had died while homesteading in North Dakota, where Ella was born. Later her mother died also, and the homestead was sold to defray expenses and accumulated debts, while her father's brother, Warren, took the little orphan in his own family. She had helped in the bringing up of the eight cousins, and in after years, when her aunt became an invalid, she bore the brunt of the house work also.

She had had little opportunity of going to school, but by utilizing her spare time finally succeeded in procuring a third grade teacher's certificate and taught school for one term. Most of her pupils were Germans who could scarcely understand a word of English, yet the way in which she got those little German children to learn was remarkable. She attended, for a short time, the Provincial Normal, where her intellectual ability attracted the attention of the members of the faculty. But the year she taught an early frost caught the fields of unripened grain, and the Benson family being in sore need of money, Ella used most of her hard earned wages for the purchase of shoes and other necessities for her cousins, besides she was obliged to go ahead with the house work again, her aunt having become more of an invalid than ever. Thus came a temporary halt to Ella's preconceived plans of some day attending a girls' college in the East.

Ella Benson was a devoted Christian, and took an active part in all that pertained to the good of the neighborhood.

Jake Landis had endeavored to pay his attentions to Miss Benson, but her intuitive mind knew that he was not

the man for her. At first she tried to make this understood by him, still treating him as a respected neighbor. But Jake took her apparent friendliness as a sign that she cared for him, and her effort at making him aware of her wish not to be on intimate terms with him as an indication that she was only making it possible for him to have some apparent difficulty in winning her. "So I'll respect her more," said Jake to his friend John Pence one day.

Finally it became necessary for Ella to treat Jake a little more severely. This seemed to make him still more persistent, until his conceit and aggressiveness became positively repulsive to the girl, and she was not long in showing him her displeasure at his repeated attentions.

Aunt Jane, whose common sense and good judgment had been outwitted by her sympathy for the lonely bachelor, Jake, argued with, then persuaded, and finally scolded her niece for refusing to accept his attentions, when he, as she so often said, "was such a nice, jolly, good natured fellow," besides, she would add, "Jake will be a great man some day, a wealthy man, could make a poor girl such a good home," and she would invariably finish by saying, "Ella, your stubbornness will be the misfortune of us all yet."

But patient Ella Benson would say but little, quietly keeping to her own convictions of right, silently praying to the Father of the fatherless for guidance in her lonely struggle.

CHAPTER IV.

A PROMISE.

As Ella Benson sat gazing at the college pictures in the magazine, and wondering if she should ever be permitted to be a member of a group of college girls, and finally resolving that somehow, some day, she would be, yet unable to see her way clear for the carrying out of such a resolve, her cousin, George Benson, came strolling into the house from his day's work in the field.

"Where's Ella?" he inquired of his mother.

"In her room looking over those magazines our new neighbor, Mrs. Stuart, gave her to read. She'll go crazy over those college pictures yet," answered Mrs. Benson.

"Ella," called her cousin, "Jake Landis is coming down the road, and I am hungry, and I expect Jake will be hungry too; you'd better come out here and get supper."

A frown involuntarily passed over Ella's forehead, while her lips set themselves firmly as though in anticipation of something disagreeable.

"It's strange that fellow can't keep away from here," she thought as she entered the kitchen to prepare the evening meal. The sudden change from pleasant day dreams of future college days to the prospective probability of seeing that big nosed, blustering Jake Landis once more enter the house with his customary sickening grin as he would speak to her aunt, and the many furtive glances toward herself, so bewildered the poor girl that she forgot to turn the meat in the frying pan until the smoke and the smell of burning meat awakened her to her duties, but not till the footsteps of the supposed Jake were heard at the door.

"Come in," welcomed George, as he opened the door.
"Good day, Mr. Stuart."

"Oh, what relief," thought Ella, as she heard the name of Stuart pronounced, and realized that George had been teasing her, that it was Mr. Stuart instead of Jake that had been seen coming down the road.

"How do you do?" said Mr. Stuart, as he took the chair George had offered him. "I brought some mail from the postoffice for you, only a couple of papers, no letters," and he handed the mail to Mrs. Benson.

"Just look at that girl, Mr. Stuart," began George, teasingly, "she is so absent minded she lets the meat burn, forgets to turn it until we are nearly smoked out."

"Oh, my!" added Mrs. Benson, "Mr. Stuart, please don't tell any of the young men around what an absent minded, poor housekeeper my niece is, or she never will find a man who will have her for a wife."

"Yes," put in George again, "Ella will be an old maid sure; just think of her living all alone some day with no company but forty-seven cats around her."

For once Ella Benson lost control of her temper, and replied rather curtly that she didn't care if she did become an old maid, nor did she wish to be married.

"She is altogether too independent," continued Mrs. Benson.

"Of course I am independent," said Ella warmly, "I was born in an independent country."

"Oh yes," spoke up George, "Ella is sticking up for the United States just because you are an American, Mr. Stuart. Jake Landis is a Yankee too, but when he brags about Yankeedom, Ella gets contrary and says she is a Canadian and sticks up for Canada. Ella hasn't much use for Jake, you know, Mr. Stuart."

"She has no reason for her contrariness either," added Mrs. Benson. "Jake is such a fine fellow, and they say too he is likely to be a member of Parliament some day. I hope he will."

"Well," said Mr. Stuart, who hitherto had had but little opportunity to speak, "I admire Miss Benson for her independence, and so far as her being absent minded is concerned, it is quite likely, in fact I believe, that in her mind there lies some latent talent that once aroused will enable her to make a mark in the world. And about Jake Landis," continued Mr. Stuart, in an endeavor to give his opinion on several subjects without interruption, "he may seem to be a fine fellow, but I don't quite see it that way, and he may go to Parliament all right, but I don't think he will get my vote."

No more was said about Jake, but Mrs. Benson insisted that if Ella was not a good housekeeper neither would she amount to much at anything else.

"Oh yes she will," assured Mr. Stuart; then turning to Ella said laughingly, "You stood up for Uncle Sam's country, and you may depend on Mrs. Stuart and I to stand up for you hereafter."

Ella's intuitive mind told her at once that though Mr. Stuart spoke to her in a joking way, at the same time he really meant every word he said, and a longing took possession of her to go to Mr. and Mrs. Stuart for sympathy.

"There's Jake sure enough this time," said George with a mischievous glance at Ella, as he looked out of the window. The Benson dogs began a furious barking; dogs seemed to have a general dislike for Jake Landis.

"Talk about the devil and he is sure to come," thought Mr. Stuart, as George went out to keep the dogs from

biting Jake. Presently in came that much talked of gentleman.

"How do," said Jake, as he slouched down on the lounge in a manner that gave one the impression that he owned the whole place and every one on it. Then grinning broadly he spoke deferentially to Mrs. Benson. Ella stood over the stove attending to the cooking apparently oblivious to the vision of Jake's ungainly attitude on the lounge.

Jake in turn cast many furtive glances toward the figure working over the stove.

Mr. Stuart was not slow in taking in the situation and purposely engaged Jake in conversation until supper was ready. He had not intended staying for supper, but he had promised to stand by Miss Benson, and here was an opportunity to help her out of a dilemma.

"Is supper ready, Ella?" asked Mrs. Benson.

"As soon as Uncle Warren and Fred come in," replied Ella, without looking up.

Presently Mr. Benson and his son Fred came in, and all were seated at the table.

"Know of any oxen for sale, Mr. Stuart?" inquired Jake as he crowded half of a potato into his capacious mouth.

"No," answered Mr. Stuart, "haven't you enough oxen, Jake?"

"One of my blamed oxen has got so run down I can't use him," said Jake.

"What is the matter with the ox?" inquired Mr. Benson quietly.

"Oh," laughed Jake, "I guess I worked him too hard, besides he's got used to drinking slough water and when I took him down on the other farm to work he wouldn't drink that alkali water in the well. I made up my mind

he could drink it or go dry, but he wouldn't drink just the same. I decided to show him that I was boss, not he, so I let him go without water, and worked him just the same, and he got sort of run down."

"How would you like to go without water?" asked Mr. Stuart.

"I wouldn't go without, I'd drink before I'd thirst to death."

"But you wouldn't drink alkali water," protested Mr. Stuart.

"I'm no ox," reasoned Jake.

"But alkali water is not good for oxen either," persisted Mr. Stuart.

"Can't be helped, haven't time to dig a new well, nor to take the oxen nearly a mile to a slough; if the ox can't stand it, I'll get another that can," said Jake.

"That is not right," insisted Mr. Stuart.

"Yes it is," claimed Jake, "get the best out of a thing you can. This country has got to be developed, and a chicken-hearted man that won't get all he can out of an ox isn't the man for a new country. The more money we can make, greater the prosperity of the country, and the better off we will all be."

"But," interposed Mr. Stuart, "some of us came here to make homes, take pleasure in fixing things up nice about the place, and in keeping our live stock in good condition. There is more in a home than the mere making of money."

"That'll do down in the old settled portions of the States, but not in a new country," replied Jake, looking quite wise.

At this juncture, Jake, who usually ate hurriedly, had finished his meal and leaned back in his chair, a habit he always had when through eating. Unfortunately one of

the little girls had, unnoticed by the other members of the family, placed a chair with a weak back at Jake's end of the table. As Jake leaned back with an air of one who had gained a point and intended crowing over it, crash went the chair back, over went Jake, until his big feet uncere- moniously struck the under side of the table, causing all of the dishes to jump about in an amazing manner.

The little girls and boys placed their hands over their mouths and proceeded to giggle, while George and Fred laughed outright. Jake rolled over on the floor, then arose looking decidedly sheepish, but with presence of mind enough to take the whole performance as a joke, and soon took on a broad grin, while every one laughed, except Ella, who betook herself to her room, and Mrs. Benson who apologetically explained about the weakness of the chair back, and reproved the little girl for placing the chair at the table.

Jake, not being able to see Ella, whom he wanted to talk with about accepting a position as school teacher with a big salary, finally requested Mrs. Benson to approach the subject to Miss Benson. He was soon shambling along toward his bachelor's quarters.

Mr. Stuart waited until Ella came back to the kitchen and invited her to call on Mrs. Stuart, then got into his buggy, spoke to his ponies and was soon speeding toward his home.

CHAPTER V.

THE TWO LETTERS.

William and Florence Stuart had been married over fifteen years. Mr. Stuart had been a prosperous farmer in Illinois, but Mrs. Stuart's poor health caused them to look for a more healthful climate. They had thought of Florida and Southern California, but a friend had moved to the great North-West and declared in his letters to Mr. and Mrs. Stuart that no more healthful place existed than where he had taken up a homestead. Consequently Mr. Stuart sold his Illinois farm and located in one of the North-West provinces, where he prided himself on his up-to-date method of farming, in fact he endeavored to make as near a model farm as could be expected in a newly settled country.

Mr. Stuart, on arriving home from the Benson homestead, began talking to Mrs. Stuart about Miss Benson. Said he, "She is a fine girl, that Miss Benson; she is a good girl too, and I am quite certain that some intellectual power lies dormant in her mind, which if given a chance, would make of her a remarkable woman. She needs sympathy too. I wish she were our girl, I'd send her to college."

After relating to his wife the events of the evening at Benson's, she fully agreed with her husband that they had better lend a helping hand to Miss Benson, for said Mrs. Stuart, "We haven't any children, and we may as well help some deserving young person to get a start in life."

"Oh! by the way, here are two letters," exclaimed Mr. Stuart, taking the letters from his coat pocket and handing them to Mrs. Stuart. "My mind was so occupied in

thinking about the difficult position in life in which Miss Benson is placed, that I forgot about the letters. Who are they from?"

"This one is from Arthur," said Mrs. Stuart, as she proceeded to read aloud the following letter:

"New York, July 5th, 19—.

Dear Uncle and Aunt:

Had an exceedingly fine time yesterday celebrating the Fourth; now don't imagine me being pestered by the noise of the popping of firecrackers by a lot of young Americas, several of whom got their fingers burned and eyebrows singed; nor my clapping my hand over my ears while a canon firecracker is being fired by two or three would-be soldiers of about ten years' growth; no, no, none of that for me, though I consider myself as patriotic an American as ever walked beneath the stars and stripes. But you may place before your eyes an imaginary picture of a wide expanse of blue water, a canopy of blue sky overhead, a black sloop with white sails spread to the wind, scudding silently, gracefully, over the waves; a half dozen young men with bronzed arms and faces—mostly college students—and the same number of young ladies dressed in white; all sitting aboard the sloop eating a lunch of cake, ice cream, fresh fruit, and melons. After lunch the musical strains from violin, guitar, mandolin, and cornet floating over the water. Grand, glorious, magnificent, this—makes one dreamy, as dreamy as the effects of old Sleepy Hollow where one stands on the stone bridge and imagines Icabod Crane galloping by on his steed while a big yellow pumpkin is being thrown at his head. This is my choice of a Fourth of July celebration. But I must not omit the climax of the whole delightful experience,

the—my—my most enjoyable conversation with Miss Mary Stone, Latin teacher at a girls' school in New York, graduate of a Pennsylvania college, a one year student at Oxford, and formerly of Chicago, Illinois. Well, let it be sufficient for me to say that Miss Stone and I are not only friends, but chums.

Must close, love to you both.

Your nephew,

ARTHUR STUART."

"I am surprised at Arthur, I did not know he cared for girls, and here he has a Miss Stone on his mind, and in his heart too, from the way he writes," said Mrs. Stuart, after she had finished reading the letter.

"Arthur likes only very sensible girls," said Mr. Stuart, "and I was thinking while riding home from Benson's that Miss Benson was just the sort of a girl Arthur would like, but it seems he has found another."

"Now the other letter," asked Mr. Stuart.

"Oh! it is from your old school-mate, Prof. Charles Bradley," and she read aloud:

"New York, July 5th, 19—.

Dear Bill:

Your nephew Arthur has been spending his vacation with us, he needs a vacation for he did two years' work in one, at college this year. Yesterday he, a Miss Stone, and our daughter Elizabeth joined a sailing party on Long Island Sound, while Mrs. Bradley and I took a run down to Long Branch.

Now here comes a surprise: Mrs. Bradley and I expect to arrive at your Arctic home in about two weeks. Besides visiting you and Mrs. Stuart, we thought to have your place for a base from which to conduct a series of exploring

expeditions to the North Pole. Please have an extra rifle ready for my use. I want to shoot polar bears while at your farm. Perhaps you can borrow a sled and dogs from one of your Esquimeaux neighbors for my use while in that ice bound region.

We may bring Arthur with us if we can persuade him to let his 'Cæsar' and 'Plato's Republic' rest for a short time.

Best of wishes from us both to you both.

Your old school-mate,

CHARLIE."

"Charles is always trying to make out that we live somewhere in the neighborhood of the North Pole," laughed Mrs. Stuart as she finished reading the letter.

"Just the thing," exclaimed Mr. Stuart, taking no notice of his wife's remark, "now I'll tell you what let's do. We have a little money laid aside, why not send Miss Benson to college in the East, she could go back with Charlie and his wife. And Arthur, I most wish he hadn't seen that Miss Stone. I am sure Miss Benson would compare favorably with Miss Stone or any other girl, and she'd be just the girl for Arthur."

"Capital idea," agreed Mrs. Stuart, "maybe Arthur will change his mind when he sees Miss Benson," Mrs. Stuart added hopefully.

"I'm afraid it is too late now," answered Mr. Stuart in a pessimistic tone of voice, "besides Arthur is just like his father, who never took a fancy to but one girl in his life, and that one he married."

The next day was a gloomy one for Ella Benson, for her Aunt Jane had urged her to accept the position of teacher at the new school, and Ella not wishing to be placed in a

position where the domineering Jake Landis might have an opportunity to further press his suit, flatly refused to teach the school, whereat her Aunt Jane gave way to tears, stormy tears, and ended by threatening to force Ella to accept the position or leave the Benson home. Ella endeavored to compromise by suggesting that she teach another school, but her Aunt Jane declared that she should teach only the home school, for said she, "Ella, if you teach our own school you can board at home and help with the work evenings and on Saturdays."

Finally Ella slipped out of the house unnoticed, and walked over to Stuart's to lay her troubles before her newly found friends.

Ella Benson had arrived at a point in her life where all seemed to go wrong with her. She prayed to God for help all of the way over to the Stuart farm. When she arrived at her friends' house, she felt a great relief, as though, somehow, God had heard and answered her prayer, yet she expected only sympathy from her new friends. Great was her surprise and joy when Mr. and Mrs. Stuart laid before her their plan to send her to college in the East.

"But," said Ella, "Uncle Warren and Aunt Jane, I am afraid, will not favor the plan, I am sure they can not spare me."

"Don't worry about that, I'll fix it up with your uncle and aunt all right," assured Mr. Stuart.

And so it was settled that Ella was to go to an eastern college, and she returned home that afternoon with a lighter heart than she had ever dreamed of before.

CHAPTER VI.

LOST.

The long west-bound passenger came rumbling up to the little station house and stopped just long enough to allow four passengers to alight on the station platform, then the drivers of the great locomotive began to turn as the portly conductor gave the engineer the signal to start, and soon the train was speeding westward across the prairie leaving the black, curling smoke trailing behind.

The four new arrivals were Prof. Bradley, a good-natured looking man with a brown moustache and a humorous twinkle in his blue eyes; Mrs. Bradley, a very good looking matron whose bearing indicated one accustomed only to surroundings of a refined nature; Miss Bradley, a pretty blue-eyed girl of about eighteen with golden hair, whose changeful manners ranged from light-hearted gaiety to supreme haughtiness; from a happy expression of the fair face to a frown and a pouting of the pretty lips; last, but not least, so far as character is concerned, a tall young man with black, serious looking eyes, a good forehead, and a rather heavy, square chin. His whole physical build gave one the impression that he was something of an athlete. He was good looking, fine looking, but his quiet, serious manner indicated one possessing great strength of character, and a willingness to abide by his convictions of right, come what may.

The party walked to the little country store and inquired of the big Scotch storekeeper the way to Mr. William Stuart's.

"'About six miles south," was the answer in rather broad Scotch.

"Where may we get some one to take us out to Stuart's?" asked Prof. Bradley.

"See that lad across the track, get him," answered the Scotchman.

The professor walked across the track to the lad as indicated.

"Will you take two ladies and two gentlemen to Mr. William Stuart's?" asked Bradley.

"Hit will take me a bit of a time to get you hout to Stuart's," answered the young man, who proved to be a Yorkshireman.

"Hand I 'ave but one 'orse, hand hit is hout to my 'omestead," added the Englishman thoughtfully.

"How far is your homestead?" asked Bradley.

"Just across the way, about 'alf a mile," said the young Briton.

"Very well then," said Bradley, becoming a little impatient at what he considered unnecessary delay, "you go get the horse and rig and drive the ladies and the young man and I will follow on foot; I will pay you well for the trouble."

After a considerable lapse of time the Englishman appeared with a horse and buggy, the ladies were seated and were soon on their way to the Stuart farm.

Prof. Bradley and the black-eyed young man, who, by the way, was no other than Arthur Stuart, were obliged to walk at a very rapid gait in order to keep in sight of the fast disappearing horse and buggy. At last they were compelled to sit down on the green grass to rest. When they arose to continue their journey the buggy was out of sight.

"Oh well," remarked Bradley, "that young Englishman looked to be a very honest young fellow, and I guess he will succeed in finding Bill Stuart's farm."

The two men had walked but a short distance when they saw about a dozen Indians coming down the trail.

"Hadn't we better make for that willow bush?" suggested Prof. Bradley, looking somewhat alarmed, but trying to act very calm.

"No use now," quietly responded Arthur Stuart, "the Indians have caught sight of us ere this, and if they intended harming us they could do so in the willow bush as well as anywhere. We may as well face the music; don't think they mean any harm anyway."

The Indians, who were on their way to visit another tribe several miles north, passed, taking little notice of the two white men.

"I didn't see any scalps hanging from their belts," said Prof. Bradley, looking much relieved.

"Don't believe they are the scalping kind," said Arthur.

At one point the trail divided, one branch running to the right of a poplar bluff and the other to the left. The two men were undecided as to which one to take, but finally took the one leading to the left, thinking that possibly the two branches would come together on the other side of the bluff. However they did not. The travelers walked a mile or so, then concluded that the trail was bearing too much to the east, accordingly they struck across the country in a westerly direction, expecting to strike the other trail. The two pedestrians tramped through poplar bluffs, around impenetrable willow thickets, circled small sloughs and ponds on which swam ducks, coots, and other water-fowl until sunset, and still failed to find the other trail, or in fact any trail at all. Swarms of mosquitos hovered about their faces, biting them on the neck, mouth, eyelids, nose; in fact, Prof. Bradley declared that he was afraid to open his mouth for fear of swallowing a half bushel of the pesky

insects, though he was hungry enough to eat a cow. The two men fought mosquitos desperately until nearly dark, making little progress, when suddenly they heard some one crashing through a clump of dead willows, gesticulating wildly and talking in broken English something like the following:

"Fawt make der goot Lort der moskeeters, for I cawn not knowed. Mine Gott! I vas crazy mit der moskeeter bites. I vould like spracken Deutch, I must not. I say I not spracken Deutch, so I learn English pedder. I tell der moskeeters to go to der bat place, das ees not svearing. I vill no svear. Mine Gott! but der moskeeters hafe sharp tooths; I vould like to be—ah—fawt dey calls she?—yah! yah! a deentist, und pull der tooths from out de moskeeters."

By this time the little German came unexpectedly upon the two Americans, who were listening, nearly convulsed with laughter.

"Ach!" said the German, "pe you homesteaders? Der moskeeters ees sair bat, I hafe not matches to macken der fire."

"We are not homesteaders," began Prof. Bradley, "but we are trying to find Mr. Stuart's homestead; we got lost. Here are some matches."

The little German took the matches, then began chopping some dry wood with which to make a fire.

"I vent to de store to puy a new ax, und ven I stard to mine house, I get lost too," said the German, as he began scratching a match to set fire to the shavings, in the process of which he burned his thumb, then began a series of broken English semi-swear words, which caused the Americans to laugh outright.

"I don't purn mine tumb for 'commodation," spoke up the German, thinking the Americans were laughing at him for burning his thumb.

"Beg your pardon," pleaded Bradley, "what is your name? This is Arthur Stuart, nephew of William Stuart, and I am Charles Bradley, a close friend of William Stuart's."

"Ach," said the German, looking pleased, "I glat to meet you. Villem Stuard ees von goot man. Mine name ees Heinrich Klein. I shust been here von year und von-half."

Soon the three men were standing closely around the roaring fire, the smoke of which kept away the mosquitos.

Presently the howl of a distant wolf was heard, then an answering howl from another direction, and soon wolves seemed to be howling in almost all directions. The two Americans looked somewhat alarmed, Bradley sizing up a large poplar tree near by and wondering if he could climb the tree in case the wolves came too near.

"De volfs no hurt," reassured Klein, adding, "dey pe hafen a peecnec some blace, maype dey fint von deat cow."

"I think it is a military assembly they are having to drive us Yankees out of the country," said Bradley.

As the men stood conversing, they heard some one shouting a short distance to the west.

They all answered simultaneously. Soon a middle-aged man with broad shoulders and wearing a well-trimmed brown beard came into view.

"Hello, boys," he said smilingly.

"Hello yourself there, Bill Stuart," answered Bradley, running forward, nearly tripping over a pile of brush.

Soon the four men were on their way to the Stuart farm.

The Englishman had arrived with the ladies and re-

turned to his own homestead. After waiting till nearly dark, William Stuart had gone in search of the lost party.

As the four men trudged homeward, that is, to Stuart's homestead, Prof. Bradley delivered a rather amusing, but interesting, lecture on mosquitos. He told of big mosquitos that could be killed with a shot from a rifle by any ordinary marksman, tiny mosquitos scarcely discernable by the naked eye whose bite was nevertheless very painful, of black, brown, gray, spotted, striped, checkered, red, white, and blue mosquitos, of huge yellow-bellied mosquitos, and mosquitos possessing swordlike appendages for slashing into the human flesh, and of long-necked mosquitos with long pipe-like bills that sucked the blood from the human body like small boys sucking cider through long straws; all to be found during any evening near sloughs and willow thickets in the north-west provinces.

As the party neared a very dense poplar bluff, they were startled by an unearthly scream. William Stuart stood still with his rifle to his shoulder, peering into the bluff. Arthur Stuart involuntarily took two or three steps backward, and the professor retreated to a considerable distance to the rear, before, as he said afterward, he could get command of his runaway legs and call a halt and a right about face. Heinrich Klein was nowhere to be seen.

"That was only the screech of a hungry lynx," assured William Stuart, taking the rifle down from his shoulder. "Come on, boys, the lynx has fled, we will go around the bluff, no danger."

"Don't know about there being no danger if the lynx is hungry," said Bradley doubtfully, endeavoring the while to gain courage enough to order his timid legs to forward march, "I imagine that lynx would be delighted with a few mouthfuls of flesh from an eastern tenderfoot."

"Where is our friend Klein?" asked Arthur, looking in vain for the non-appearing little German.

"Come on, Heinrich," shouted William Stuart.

"Yah," came faintly from a distant willow thicket, "hafe you got de pig animal kilt?"

"No, but we are out of danger now," reassured William Stuart.

"Tanks," said Heinrich gratefully, as he cautiously emerged from the thicket, "fawt you call him, ees it a pear or a lion?"

"It's a lynx," answered the other homesteader.

"Ach, a link, she pe von pig fellow to macken a pig yell like dat," said Heinrich, as he joined the others on their way around the bluff.

"I tink your homestead ees vay around und back und behint de poplar bloof, Meester Stuard," said Heinrich anxiously.

"Yes," answered Stuart, "do you see that light ahead? That is from my house."

Soon all arrived safely at the Stuart farm house, where the three ladies were in some anxiety awaiting them, and later they were sitting around the supper table partaking of a good old-fashioned farmer's meal.

The next morning Klein returned to his homestead.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WALK.

In the course of the next few weeks Arthur Stuart had met Miss Ella Benson; had played croquet, carroms, crokinole, and other games with her and Elizabeth Bradley, and the three young people had taken several drives across the prairie with William Stuart's ponies and buggy; they had taken strolls together for the purpose of gathering and studying the many species of wild flowers. Through it all Arthur had to admit to himself that he liked Ella Benson, in fact the long eyelashes shielding the pretty half dreamy blue eyes, the noble forehead surmounted by blonde hair, and her common sense talk made spicy by her quick but timely wit fairly captivated the young college athlete. But, thought he, sensibly, she wants to go to college too, and I must refrain from being too attentive until she is well established in her college life.

On the other hand Ella Benson could scarcely withhold her gaze from the tall, black-eyed young man, except when he was looking at her. Those serious black eyes seemed to act as a magnetic power drawing her closer and closer, yet she managed to be calm and act as independent as possible.

Elizabeth Bradley, who was also fond of Arthur, was also jealous of her new western acquaintance, and at times used her most winning smiles, her most joyous manner, summoning up all of the wit and coquetry at her command; then again as she caught the telltale glances of the black eyes toward the blue ones of Ella Benson, Elizabeth became the picture of despondency.

Arthur attempted to treat both girls as near alike as possible under the circumstances, nevertheless Elizabeth

knew intuitively that Arthur liked Ella better than herself, and she was afraid that Ella's intuition would discern the same truth. Finally as a last resort, one day when Elizabeth and Ella were alone together, the former, in a matter of fact way, made known to the latter Arthur's close friendship with a certain Miss Mary Stone. Thought Elizabeth, "If I can't win Arthur from Ella myself, I'll spoil the possibility of a match between them by making known Arthur's friendship for Miss Stone."

After this Ella, who actually had begun to hope for a future with Arthur Stuart, after her college days, of course, unselfishly gave up such day dreams, hoping, however, to sometime make the acquaintance of this Miss Stone, to see what kind of a girl Arthur Stuart really did like.

One day while the three young people were taking a walk, who should come striding along but Councilor Jake Landis. He stopped and spoke to Ella, who silently nodded her head, and was about to resume her walk without introducing Jake to the two Easterners.

Jake, however, was not to be put off so easily, and introduced himself and proceeded to accompany the trio in their walk, trying to get alongside of Ella. Arthur, who had heard Ella's history from his Uncle William, understood the situation and managed to get Jake to walking with Elizabeth, while he himself took the lead with Ella. Ella involuntarily gave an appreciative glance at Arthur, who understood.

Jake tried in vain to entertain Elizabeth; he talked about oxen, bachelor's life on a homestead, elections, and many other subjects of interest to himself, but of little interest to the disheartened and jealous Elizabeth who

walked along in silent contempt, watching sharply the actions of the couple walking ahead.

Jake was undaunted, however, and began again on the subject of oxen. "I say, Miss Bradley," said Jake with one of his most sickly grins, "what kind of oxen do you like best for general farm purposes, Short-horns, Herefords, or scrub oxen?"

"I don't like oxen at all, I don't know anything about Short-horns, or Herefords, or scrubs, and I don't care to be enlightened on the subject," said Elizabeth curtly, looking in the opposite direction from her would-be entertainer.

"Well," persisted Jake, "you ought to know about 'em, if you stay here. Short-horns are a good beefy stock, Herefords are more gentle, but I prefer scrubs, they can stand winter through with only straw for feed, and snow for water, and they can stand more whip-lashing, and they can——"

"I don't care to hear any more on the subject," interrupted Elizabeth. "I am dreadfully tired of country life anyway."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Jake, "country life is just the sort to make a stout, healthy girl of a city bred one like you. Say, can you milk a cow?"

"Milk nothing," said Elizabeth scornfully, "no, I don't even like to drink milk."

"You'll miss half of your life if you don't learn to drink milk," answered Jake.

"In that case," replied Elizabeth, "I don't want to live the other half of my life."

"Say," said Jake, thinking to change to a more suitable subject, "Miss Eliza—er—ah—Miss Bradley, don't you

think it's a sign of good luck to have a black cat around a bachelor's quarters?"

"I do not like black cats, nor big nosed bachelors either," ventured Elizabeth, exasperated beyond control.

"Well, I don't know as I'm particularly fond of city girls either," responded Jake, getting a little angry.

"I'm mighty glad you don't, for I am a city girl, and I think we had better part company here, good day," and Elizabeth ran ahead and joined Arthur and Ella.

Jake rather awkwardly bid Arthur and Ella farewell and walked away, muttering threats against that young college student for coming in between him and Ella Benson.

"I'll get even with that Bill Stuart's nephew yet," said Jake to John Pence, afterward. "I'll see to it that that young college fool don't carry my Ella off, don't you forget it."

"I hope so," agreed John, "but I've an idea you'll have to get up before daylight in the morning to do it," added John with his usual doubt lingering in his mind.

"Never you mind," assured Jake. "I've got my plans laid, time will tell."

"I don't like that Mr. Jake Landis, if he is a councilor and a prospective member of parliament," said Elizabeth, as she joined Arthur and Ella in their walk toward the Stuart farm house.

"Neither do I," responded Ella quietly.

Arthur wisely refrained from saying anything about the councilor, but added mentally to himself, "I don't like him either and it behooves me to keep an eye on him from what I have heard, and that I most assuredly will do."

By this time the young people had arrived at the house and soon all were seated about the table eating the midday meal.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRIP.

The east-bound passenger pulled up to the little station. Prof., Mrs. and Miss Bradley, Mr. Arthur Stuart, and Miss Ella Benson all boarded the train, assisted by the obliging colored porter; the trunks were shoved into the baggage car, once more the portly conductor signaled the engineer, and the train sped on its way toward Winnipeg.

Ella Benson looked the picture of happiness as she sat looking at the log farm houses, fields of grain, herds of cattle, little towns and villages, and the willow and poplar bluffs as they flew by in rapid succession.

Opposite and facing her sat Arthur Stuart quietly conversing with her and Elizabeth when she looked at him, but silently gazing at her when she looked out of the window. Elizabeth sat beside her, jealously watching Arthur. Prof. and Mrs. Bradley sat across the aisle.

Ella's long cherished plans were being realized, she was actually on her way to an eastern college. O! what joy! what expectancy! the great future opening out before her! the black wall of adversity pierced at last. Then she thought sorrowfully of how her uncle and aunt and cousins would miss her. She thought, too, of her church work; who would, who could take her place as teacher at the Sabbath school? She loved her country with all of its trials and hardships; a great future lay before it, she knew those toiling pioneers were the making of a great nation. She almost regretted leaving the great wide North-West. "But," and she brightened up again, "I'm getting rid of that Jake Landis, oh! that's good, welcome the East, the change will do me good." Such were the thoughts that

passed through her mind as the train moved on toward Winnipeg, the metropolis of the North-West.

"I like this country," thought Arthur, "the freedom of the open country appeals to me, but I like that little blonde girl better," and he involuntarily cast a fleeting glance at Ella, whose half dreamy blue eyes were feasting on his serious black ones, she blushed and looked quickly out of the window at the landscape.

They changed cars at Winnipeg, and later arrived at St. Paul, where they had a half day's wait, during which time they walked to a bridge and looked at the Mississippi, the "Father of Waters," after which they visited the state capitol building.

Fourteen hours later found them walking down Michigan avenue, Chicago's great boulevard, and looking out on the waters of Lake Michigan. Then across the vast fields of corn of central Illinois, the large and well painted farm houses, barns, corn cribs, and windmills, the orchards loaded with fruit, and the beautifully laid out cities of the old prairie state, then across the smaller farms of Indiana, until they arrive at Cincinnati. Here they spend a few days with Prof. Bradley's cousin, a Mr. Joseph Brown, dry goods merchant, living near the beautiful Eden Park, overlooking the great business section of the city in the valley below, the Ohio river winding gracefully through the valley, the Kentucky hills beyond.

They had a very enjoyable time at Brown's brick residence, which stood on a hill, a flight of stone steps leading to the street below. In the back yard were many grape vines loaded with fruit, and back of the vines Mr. Brown's poultry yard and house containing his Buff Orpingtons, "show birds," he proudly declared.

While at Cincinnati the party participated in rides up

and down the steep inclines, traced the winding streets, and on one occasion took a trolley ride across the river to Fort Thomas, where they viewed a regiment of infantry on parade, and inspected the mess hall, the "Krag-Jorgensen rifles, the cannon, one of the soldiers explaining to them all of the details of a soldier's life in barracks.

They visited the zoo, where the ladies were greatly amused at seeing Prof. Bradley and Arthur ride a dromedary. Said the professor, "The brute, when it begins to rise, after you get fairly seated on its back, first gets half way up, preserving a fair equilibrium, then up goes its hind parts, and you get your nose bumped on the animal's hump, then up goes its foreparts, and you nearly fall off backwards. And when it trots, it shambles along, going sideways, frontways, backwards, and up and down all at the same time."

Arthur and the girls also took an elephant ride, to the great enjoyment of all concerned, except the elephant. During these pleasure-trips Arthur had little opportunity to talk with Ella alone, as Elizabeth took good care not to allow Arthur and Ella to be alone together. The more Arthur saw of Ella Benson, the better he liked her. "I like her better than I do Miss Stone and in a different way," thought Arthur, as he tried to sleep one night but could not for the ever recurring vision of a blonde girl with dreamy blue eyes looking out from under long eyelashes. Several times he inadvertently let drop a word that caused Ella to wonder if he really was forgetting that Miss Stone. She hoped so; it was selfish in her to hope so; suppose he did like her better than Miss Stone; then poor Miss Stone would suffer. Thus the conscientious Ella pondered to herself, undecided whether to encourage Arthur's attentions or not.

The visit at an end, the party were again on board a train speeding across the state of Ohio; then over the mountains of West Virginia, through tunnels, across deep ravines and great chasms, the snow-capped peaks ever in sight; until down the picturesque Potomac river they follow, crossing the river at Harper's Ferry, famous for the John Brown raid, where clouds float against the side of the mountain, recoil, roll backwards, downwards, then around the mountain.

At some of the stations old negro women pass along the train, selling fried chicken to the hungry passengers.

Soon Washington is reached. The party walk up the steps of the great capitol building, then down Pennsylvania avenue to the Washington Monument, up which they ascend in a huge elevator to the top, from whence they look across the river to the fields and old colonial houses of Virginia, and the old battlefield of Bull Run. They take a walk around the White House and again are on a train making rapid progress toward Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, by name, but not so in truth since good William Penn passed away. Through the city the train passes and soon is gliding swiftly over the fields and meadows of western New Jersey. Dairy cows peacefully graze in the stone fenced pastures unmindful of the Philadelphia flyer, locally known as the "Filly," which is making fast time on its way to Jersey City. Next the on-rushing flyer is passing vegetable, fruit, and poultry farms by the hundreds, through towns and cities with great factories and beautiful residences, never stopping for anything. The flyer has a clear track, as it is a four track road, one track used for east-bound passengers, one for west-bound passengers, one for east-bound freight trains, and one for west-bound freights. The road is graded over

the wagon roads or there is a wagon bridge over the railroad at each crossing. Through the cities and towns the railroad is graded high in order to bridge over each street, thus eliminating the congestion of street traffic across the railroad.

All of these details Arthur carefully explained to the ever interested and ever interesting Ella.

Soon the train is crossing the long bridge over Newark Bay, then rushes on to Jersey City, and into the great steel train shed swiftly it runs as if it was determined on plunging right into the Hudson river, but the engineer applies the air-brakes in such a manner that the train is soon brought to a standstill before the great iron gates. Train after train is standing side by side, newsboys are calling out the headlines of their dailies, trucks piled high with baggage go rumbling by, great crowds, thousands of people, some hurrying to catch out-going trains, others hurrying, almost running, to catch the ferry-boats, while some leisurely seat themselves at the long tables in the railroad restaurant and lunch on sandwiches and the most delicious of cocoa, or hot coffee.

As our party starts to enter the restaurant, a few soldiers hurry by guarding a chest on a truck. Ella looked wonderingly at them.

"They are taking gold bullion to the United States mint at Washington," informed Arthur.

After refreshment at the restaurant, our party board a ferry-boat and soon are gliding over the waters of the Hudson. In the distance the towering skyscrapers of lower New York loom up. Out in the middle of the river, the great ocean liner the Wilhelm Der Grosse is slowly turning its great sides around preparatory to heading down river to the harbor, thence through the Narrows, around

Sandy Hook and out to sea, bound for Germany. Ferry boats are everywhere, sometimes looking as though they were about to collide with each other, each one loaded to its fullest capacity with passengers. Noisy little tug boats towing in line great barges or long flat boats on which a whole freight train, minus the engine, may be seen. The whistling of many kinds of water craft and the ringing of bells are almost deafening to one not accustomed to them. The swish of the water against the sides of the boat and the foaming, swirling water sparkling in the sunlight in the wake of the boat was pleasing to Ella. Everything was of great interest to her, and was minutely explained to her by Arthur.

There were two French cruisers anchored mid-river. Southward in the harbor could be seen Bartholdi's great Statue of Liberty with uplifted arm proclaiming freedom to all who enter the land. Along the banks of the Hudson great docks stand side by side where ocean steamers enter to discharge their cargo. Up the river on the New York side can be seen the great dome of Grant's tomb, and beyond on the Jersey shore the great Palisades rise perpendicular from the river.

At last the boat glides into its dock, the planks are lowered, the iron gates fly open, and the crowd hurries through the ferry house into the street.

Our party take a trolley and at last stop at an avenue over which is built an elevated railway and beneath which runs the sub-way trolley lines. Now they walk along the fine residence apartments. Each apartment has in front an iron gate, from which a paved walk leads to a flight of stone steps. On each side of the walk is a beautiful green. The steps lead to the massive front door.

It was into one of these fashionable apartments that our party entered, a kindly old negro butler opened the door, and all entered a hall, where were hat and coat racks and huge mirrors. The dusty travelers took off their wraps and were soon seated in the parlor. Great oak and mahogany arm chairs, upholstered, sat in convenient parts of the room; a large bay window gave a good view of the street; fine tapestries and vases of flowers, and beautiful statuary were in various parts of the room; a piano on which lay sheets of music and a mandolin stood near the window. Fine Oriental rugs spread over the floor. "Everything was grand," so thought Ella Benson as she sat listening to Mrs. Bradley play the piano, Elizabeth playing the mandolin, and Arthur's well-trained voice singing. The room was filled with music, and Ella hardly knew whether it was all a dream, or real life. Such was Ella Benson's introduction into the great American metropolis.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW YORK CITY.

During Ella Benson's stay at the Bradley apartment, Arthur Stuart took her and Elizabeth on several excursions about the city. They walked by the Waldorf-Astoria, but were satisfied to only look at the many little tables around which sat millionaires, legislators, and their fashionably dressed wives and daughters. Arthur's financial means would not permit the three sightseers to be quite so ostentatious as the diners at the Waldorf-Astoria, so they lunched at a restaurant across the street from the fashionable hotel; said Arthur, "This is about as near as we can come to dining at the Waldorf-Astoria."

Our trio went through Tiffany's great establishment, looking at the richly inlaid vases, cut glass dishes, china tea sets, diamond rings, and all kinds of priceless jewelry. Especially did Arthur notice Ella's comment on certain little gold rings studded with, not diamonds, but cute little pearls. Elizabeth in striking contrast liked a big gold ring with a flashing diamond. "Ella has the best taste," thought Arthur.

They watched the immigrants land at the Battery; sturdy Italian women carrying great packs on their heads, light-haired Pollocks acting somewhat bewildered, dark-skinned Hungarians jabbering away at each other, and a motley array of other foreigners coming to the land of freedom to get a start in life. Thoughtful Ella Benson was much interested in it all, and wondered if all of these foreigners would make good citizens. Arthur, always on the alert, noticing Ella's attentiveness to her surroundings, and quite successfully following the trend of her thoughts, he being something of a mind reader, told her that most of these foreigners would make good citizens if treated right. She

looked up in surprise at his ability to read her mind so correctly. Then she blushed and turned her head at the thought that possibly he might be able to read too far and realize that she thought more of him than his supposed relation with Miss Stone warranted her to think.

Elizabeth fretfully said she was tired of looking at those dreadful foreigners. The three young sight-seers then proceeded to investigate the Aquarium at Castle Garden, Arthur explaining that at one time this circular building was used as an immigrant landing station. Here they saw, in great glass cases filled with water, more kinds of fish than Ella ever dreamed existed. In the center of the building on the ground floor were seals swimming about in artificial ponds, also other large sea animals. Another day they visited Central Park, watched the hippopotamuses and its young in a huge tank of water, the antics of the monkeys, and other wild animals. While passing through the park, Ella was surprised to see squirrels come scampering out to meet them, looking for crumbs and peanuts that the passers-by were wont to throw at them. They walked through picturesque Morning-side Park; something about the solitariness of this little park reminded one of things romantic, and Arthur felt romantic and wished he were alone with Ella so he could tell her what he really thought of her. Ella had a similar feeling in regard to him, but always that barrier of Arthur's probable interest in Miss Stone crossed Ella's mind and she quickly, though not very effectually, abandoned such thoughts. They passed Columbia University, called King's College in the old colonial days; walked along River-side Drive, then took a trolley back to Bradley's.

At another time Arthur took the two young ladies down Broadway, where great bulky looking policemen with uplifted hand, kept back long lines of trolley cars, electric

drays, automobiles, and trucks drawn by big prancing percherons, vehicles of every description, while great crowds of people crossed the street; then up would go the policeman's other hand to the crowd to stop while the trolley cars and vehicles take their turn at crossing. At every street crossing this same scene was being enacted.

Ella noticed the great stone steel-bound sky-scrapers as she passed; the superb grand buildings containing offices of trust companies, railroad companies, steamship companies, banks, boards of trade, brokers' offices, etc. They passed through Wall Street, the great business street that sometimes rules the financial world of the new continent, and even affects that of the old world. Everything was massive, grand beyond description, all on such a large scale, that Ella felt she was but a mere atom in a big world, so immense, so powerful as to make her actually wonder that she was really big enough to be alive. The immensity of it all was almost oppressive. She noticed Arthur watching her closely as though to protect her from harm; this was comforting indeed and she felt more able to breathe.

Elizabeth was carelessly, almost listlessly, walking by her side, apparently indifferent to her surroundings.

One evening the three strolled out on the long Recreation Pier extending into East River, and listened to the music of the band and watched the tired men, women, and children come from their day's work to recuperate under the influence of the music and the invigorating breeze from the ocean.

They also walked half way across the Brooklyn Bridge and beheld from there the tier upon tier of lights in the sky-scrapers of lower Manhattan, the lights of the boats on the harbor and East River, the great light set in the upheld hand of the Statue of Liberty, the Brooklyn and

Long Island City lights, the lights across the harbor at St. George and New Brighton on Staten Island, the lights from the fort on Governor's Island, and lights from the forts guarding the Narrows; lights everywhere.

During all of this sight-seeing, Arthur was very attentive to Ella. In spite of his former declaration to himself to refrain from being too attentive to her till she was well started in her school work, Arthur's love,—for he finally admitted that it was love—for Ella got the better of him; nor was he over careful in his actions to keep Elizabeth from a knowledge of that love. Still Ella was puzzled to know what to do. Did she love Arthur Stuart? She knew she had ever since the walks and rides with him out in the province. But the question uppermost in her mind was whether to allow his affections to drift from Miss Stone to herself. Still she felt that Arthur, if he loved her, would do so whether she gave him permission to do so or not. She was about to make up her mind to, in fact her love for him seemed to compel her to reciprocate openly Arthur's apparent affection for her, when Elizabeth, poor disconsolate, fretful Elizabeth, stirred to desperation through jealousy, attempted another ruse. She casually remarked to Ella, one day, that she was surprised at Arthur's actions, when he was supposed to be engaged to Miss Stone. "Could it be," she said, "that Arthur was really flirting?" Ella was more puzzled than ever now. She was sure that Arthur was in earnest, she could not help but weep, at times, when alone, to think that she, Ella Benson, who took for her motto the "Golden Rule," might be the cause of Arthur's estrangement from Miss Stone, for she was sure that Arthur had not called on Miss Stone since their arrival in New York. She felt that there was some mystery that needed explaining, but decided to let things take their course, and await results.

CHAPTER X.

SAM HOWELL.

Sam Howell was a big, jolly good natured young man, with merry twinkling brown eyes, and an ever ready wit; he possessed a faculty for making people laugh; in fact solemnity in the presence of Sam was almost an impossibility. He was especially popular with the girls. Most girls like fun, and where Sam Howell was there was fun in abundance. Despite his avoirdupois Sam was quite at ease, whether reclining, walking, or dancing. Furthermore he was a good conversationalist. He was a sophomore at a college in upper Manhattan, and being a friend of the Bradleys, and a chum of Arthur Stuart, he was frequently to be found at the Bradley apartment.

Arthur was hoping, now that Sam had returned from a recent visit in Pennsylvania, that Elizabeth would transfer her affections from himself to Sam, and thus give him a free rein in winning the heart of the little woman he loved. He was aware that Elizabeth had always liked Sam, and that it was not till the recent trip to the North-West that she seemed to take a fancy to himself. However, Elizabeth not only refused to make such a transfer in her affections, but Sam became afflicted with a decided fancy for Miss Benson. And one morning when the two young men were talking of accompanying the two young ladies on a bicycle trip out on Long Island, there was some difficulty in deciding as to who should accompany Miss Benson. After much controversy, in which Sam declared that he was too big and clumsy to keep even within hailing distance of Miss Bradley, therefore he should remain behind with Miss Benson, as she had not yet learned to ride well; and Arthur claimed that Miss Benson should receive the benefit of instruction from a good rider, and

if Sam was too clumsy to be considered a good rider, the lot of instructor should fall to himself.

At Sam's suggestion, it was decided that they draw straws; the short straw for Miss Benson and the long one for Miss Bradley. Sam drew the lucky short straw, and Arthur, to his own disappointment and to Elizabeth's delight, accompanied the latter over one of the cycle paths of western Long Island, followed at a considerable distance behind by Sam and Ella. Ella was delighted with Sam's company, she liked the good natured young man, but she loved Arthur Stuart.

Soon after this Arthur returned to college in the upper part of New York state, while Ella and Elizabeth entered a girls' seminary in New York City, Ella still making her home with the Bradleys'. Sam also returned to his studies.

Both the girls had promised to enter into a friendly correspondence with Arthur. He was not particular about keeping up a correspondence with Elizabeth, but thought that by so doing he would appease her jealousy, and thus there would be less likelihood of her interfering with his plans for winning Ella.

On an occasional Saturday afternoon Sam Howell came with his automobile to take the girls on a pleasure trip about the city or into the surrounding country. Once when he came, Elizabeth was out shopping. Sam persuaded Ella to go without Elizabeth as far as his own home, a few blocks away, where his sister entered the car and sat beside Ella.

Elizabeth in her letter to Arthur wrote, "I suppose Sam Howell is getting tired of me, at least it seems he cares so much more for Ella that he deliberately chooses to take her out in his auto leaving poor little me at home; and Ella certainly must reciprocate Sam's attentions to her or she would not accompany him alone."

When Arthur read these lines, he felt sick at heart, "Could it be," he thought, "that Sam is winning Ella away from me? that she under the influence of his wit and delightful repartee was learning to care for him?" "Still," he said to himself, as he read Ella's letter over for the third time, "the contents of her letter do not indicate a change of heart."

In reality, Ella was secretly nursing a great joy in her heart. When she entered the seminary, she discovered, to her great surprise that Miss Mary Stone was to be her Latin teacher, furthermore that Miss Stone was over forty and a most lovable woman; that she possessed an open-hearted straightforward western way which was lacking in the other members of the faculty. Ella felt at home with Miss Stone and the two became great friends. She realized now that Miss Stone was a friend to Arthur in the same way that she was a friend to herself. She was so happy in the thought that after all Miss Stone's and Arthur's friendship was only Platonic, and that she was probably free to even love Arthur so far as any other girl was concerned.

One day when Sam and his friend Tom Maxwell were walking with Ella and Elizabeth through Morning-side Park, Tom, who had taken a liking to Elizabeth, suggested to her that they sit down on a big boulder to rest; they did so, unnoticed by Sam and Ella who were in the lead. The last named couple walked some distance before they were aware that the other couple were not following, and when they realized that they were alone, they sat on the green grass to await the arrival of Tom and Elizabeth.

Sam took advantage of the fact that he was alone with Ella, and to her surprise and embarrassment, actually proposed to her. She was at a loss to know what reply to give, she liked him, and she did not wish to hurt his feel-

ings, yet how could she say yes, did she not love Arthur Stuart? or could she learn to love Sam Howell? in that case it would be Arthur's heart that would receive the wound. She did not want to wound anyone; why had things taken this course? Why must she be obliged to give another such pain? Was it her fault? Should she have refused to accompany Sam on his motor tours? But how was she to know he was in love with her? She thought he was out only for a good time. These thoughts passed through Ella's mind, while she grew pale, almost faint. And Sam sat by her side patiently waiting for an answer. "Oh! I simply can not tell him no now," she thought as she noticed his face turning pale and saw his hand tremble as it plucked at a near by flower. She finally asked for time, a week, in which to consider his proposal. "It was so unexpected," she told him. At the end of the week of grace, Ella Benson was no more ready to say no than she was the day Sam proposed to her in the little park, neither could she bring herself to the point of giving him the answer he longed for. Sam pleaded his case well, Ella wished she could say yes, she admired the manly way in which he pressed his suit.

At last, however, she summoned all of the courage at her command, and told him she loved another. Sam took the answer so bravely, that for one instant Ella almost wished she had said yes, "He certainly deserves it," she thought, "but," and the next moment she was ashamed that she had for one moment entertained the thought of forsaking the one she loved that another might be made happy. "To be sure," she said to herself afterward "Arthur has not told me that he loved me, but I know he does, and perhaps," and she blushed as she finished the sentence in thought only, "he will tell me when he comes back next vacation."

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE SOUND.

Ella made rapid progress in her studies and in due time graduated from the seminary, having needed but one year's work to prepare for college. The next year she was to enter college.

Elizabeth also graduated, but decided not to enter college. She didn't care for any more schooling, she said, she liked sports and traveling and theatre going, and had no more time for study.

When vacation came again, Arthur Stuart returned to Bradleys', but found to his great disappointment that Ella was visiting at the home of a schoolmate, who lived among the Highlands of the Hudson. But on the 3d. of July she returned from her Highland visit, and that very evening Arthur told Ella that she, Elizabeth, and himself had been invited to spend the Fourth with a sailing party on Long Island Sound. Ella gladly accepted the invitation and the next morning the three crossed East River on a ferry and took the Long Island train from Long Island City to a small town on the north shore of Long Island. From here they walked by a quaint old fashioned Dutch farm house; over shady parts of the road where large weeping willows stood by the roadside, and great oak and elm trees rose above, here a stone fence, there an old time rail fence, the branches of the trees met and interlaced over head, the thick green foliage almost shutting out the sunlight; then passed an inn where ice cream and soda, and beer too, was being consumed by dusty pedestrians; now skirting a beautiful inlet, until they arrive at Hempstead Harbor, where, anchored some distance from the shore lay a sailing vessel, which Arthur said was the sloop the party had char-

tered for the day. To the right, situated on a hill, and overlooking the Harbor and Sound, stood an up-to-date farm house, while on the beach in front of it could be seen a boat house. As they stepped on the beach, Ella stopped to gaze at the wave washed pebbles worn smooth and bright by the action of the salt water, the many kinds of pretty shells, here a dead horse-shoe crab, there the claws of a lobster, and then a jelly-fish, not unlike a mass of transparent white jelly, and clinging to the under side of a boulder several reddish-yellow star-fish, while at her feet lay a couple of black "devil's pocket books" or the dried shells of a shark's eggs. Around the sloop seagulls were swimming, a mile or so out on the Sound hundreds of ducks could be seen, and beyond a half dozen yachts were racing with the wind, while coming in from the east a little steam tug-boat was towing several big cumbersome looking scows. And far beyond, perhaps seven miles, could be seen the beautiful Connecticut shore, the green hills dotted here and there with villages and towns, while rising above the green foliage on the side of a hill a castle-like building, the home of some millionaire, or perhaps a U. S. ambassador or other government official. What wonder that Ella was almost dazed with the beauty, the picturesqueness of it all.

One of Arthur's college chums with a row-boat awaited them at the shore. "Hello there Jack Ludlow," said Arthur shaking hands with the broad-shouldered student, who happened to be a member of the college boat crew. "Glad to see you Art," answered the college chum.

Arthur introduced the two ladies, then they were all seated in the boat, and Arthur and Jack Ludlow took up the oars, and soon the boat was swiftly gliding out toward the sloop.

"The whole party are aboard, except us," informed Jack, "and there is a new man aboard this time."

"Who," enquired Arthur.

"A young fellow from one of the north-west provinces of Canada, who is a candidate for member of parliament, and according to his own statement, sure of being elected."

"How came he in the party?" asked Arthur.

"Well," explained Jack, "Tom Maxwell is a second cousin to him, though Tom says he didn't know it till his cousin presented his credentials, and as the Westerner said he was acquainted with and had a message for Miss Benson, whom we knew was to be invited, Tom felt obliged to invite his cousin also."

Arthur who believed he knew who this young Westerner was, asked Jack what message the fellow had and who from.

"Guess the message is from Miss Benson's aunt from what he told Tom," answered Jack.

Arthur felt uncomfortable, and he could see that Ella's suspicions were aroused and that she was feeling very uneasy. By this time the boat was along side of the sloop, and the late arrivals were taken aboard.

Ella Benson turned pale and felt like gasping for breath as she saw Jake Landis standing on deck grinning at her. Arthur's black eyes turned blacker and fairly snapped as he noticed Jake, and the embarrassment his presence caused Ella.

Both Ella and Elizabeth endeavored to keep away from Jake Landis; and though Miss Stone was aboard, Arthur left her and Elizabeth for other gentlemen to entertain, and devoted his attentions as strictly to Ella Benson as circumstances would permit.

Soon the sails were spread to the breeze, and the sloop

moved slowly out into the Sound, then as the breeze increased the vessel fairly flew over the blue water. The sailors began to tack in toward the Connecticut coast. The vessel would glide along for some distance, then suddenly, under the manipulation of the sailors, the ship would turn, the spray flying aboard in showers as the bow turned against the wind. The men protected the ladies from the flying spray by holding umbrellas over them. Now the vessel is gliding along as before, but in a different direction. Then another turn is made, and thus the sloop zigzags across the Sound against the wind to the Connecticut side. As the green hills and pretty inlets of the New England coast is nearly reached, the vessel is turned toward the Long Island shore, and now a straight course is taken with the wind. The boat fairly bounds over the waves. As the middle of the Sound is reached, the wind gradually dies down until there is a dead calm, and the sloop finally comes to a stand-still.

Several of the young men go down into the hold of the ship and reappear wearing bathing suits, then plunge overboard amid the laughter of those on board.

The swimmers strike out boldly away from the ship until they swim a considerable distance, when the cry of "sharks" comes from one of the sailors. The swimmers make for the vessel as fast as they can and clamber on board.

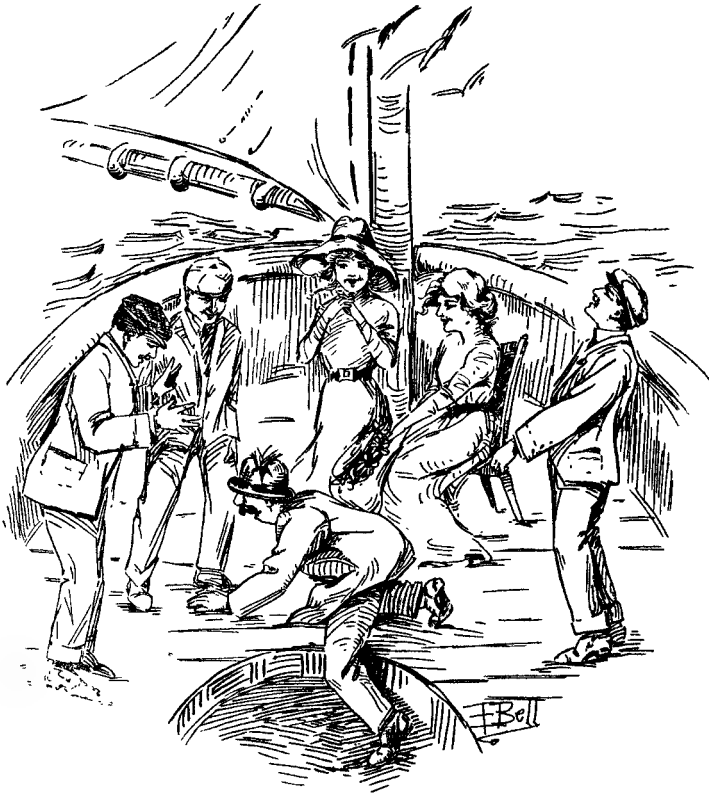
"Where are the sharks?" they ask breathlessly.

"See over to star-board, sir," points out the sailor. And there sure enough not more than a quarter of a mile can be seen the sharp fins of several sharks extending above the surface of the water.

After an appetizing lunch, several of the party form an improvised orchestra, and the music floats out over the still water; the water contributing to it a soft liquid tone that fairly enraptures the listeners.

Jake Landis seeing no opportunity to converse with Ella, turned his attentions to Elizabeth, but Tom Maxwell was careful not to allow his newly found cousin a monopoly in that quarter, and as each of the other ladies was accompanied by some young man, Jake contented himself with boisterously relating to the whole party the first principles of money making in the North-West. He also told them of what great things he intended doing when he became a member of parliament; in fact he endeavored to give the impression that he was a very capable fellow; could do anything, from the breaking in of a wild steer to the drafting of a bill to be introduced into parliament. It was while he was in the midst of exploiting his achievements that he accidentally stepped on a banana peel, when with a thump, thump, of his big feet in his endeavors to catch himself from falling, he tumbled backwards through the hatchway into the hold of the ship. Only his number ten shoes could be seen above the floor of the deck, while down in the hold came smothered exclamations, only now and then a word being intelligible, which words sounded not unlike those used by him when driving oxen; words not found in the dictionary. Several of the men went to the rescue, and Jake was pulled out and placed right end up. Everybody laughed when it was discovered that Jake's stiff hat had been shoved down over his eyes, and would have descended farther but for the largeness of his nose; the crown of the hat had been torn off, and a crop of light brown hair protruded through the top of the hat, resembling pins in a pin cushion.

It is late in the afternoon before there is sufficient breeze to fill the sails and move the sloop into Hempstead Harbor, and it is quite dark when the party is rowed ashore.



Everybody laughed when it was discovered that Jake's stiff hat had been shoved down over his eyes.

CHAPTER XII.

A STREET EPISODE.

During the whole voyage on the Sound, Arthur managed to keep near Ella, even refraining from joining the swimmers, in order to shield her from any forced attentions from Jake Landis, who had no opportunity of thrusting himself in her company. However, as Arthur, Ella, and Elizabeth boarded the Long Island train, Jake got on with them.

At Long Isand City as the party boarded the ferry boat, the crowd was so great that despite Arthur's watchfulness, Jake succeeded in separating Ella from Arthur and Elizabeth, and kept by her side. And when the boat reached the New York pier, Jake managed to get Ella farther away from Arthur and Elizabeth, and as they entered the ferry station with the surging crowd, Jake took Ella's arm and marched her along with the crowd of people into the street. Ella turned and looked anxiously for Arthur, who could see she was frightened. She could not see him, and he took Elizabeth by the arm and almost ran over men, women, and children in his mad rush to reach Jake and Ella, but before he could do so, they were out of sight.

Jake Landis had planned all of this before hand. He reasoned that unless he could get Ella away from Arthur Stuart, his case would be lost. He believed also that if he could get her alone with him, and by force, take her to a magistrate and frighten her into marrying him, that once married she would never break her marriage vow no matter how distasteful to her a life with him might be. He did not like this method of marrying a girl, to be sure, but he had said he would have Ella Benson for his wife and this was the only way whereby he could get her at all.

As they walked along the street, Ella tried to turn back, but Jake kept a firm grip on her arm. Once she was about to call for help, but he told her he would take her into an alley and down the Bowery if she attempted to cry out. She was well aware that she could call a policeman to her aid, but she detested a scene in public, especially in a street, where the notoriety of it would get into the newspapers. Then too, Jake had just told her that he had a message from her aunt, and she was curious to hear what the message was.

"You may as well make up your mind, Ella, I'm bound to marry you, besides your uncle and aunt and cousins favor such a course, and I am sure to be elected member of parliament and all will be well. You will have a fine house, jewelry, nice dresses, anything you desire, only you must marry me. It is for your own good and your relatives too. I'll be good to you Ella, you may be sure of that." Thus Jake argued as he forced her hurriedly along. She made no reply but silently prayed to her Heavenly Father for help, then began to think of some feasible plan for extricating herself from this dilemma. Finally she told him that she wanted to finish her schooling before she married anyone. She thought that by pretending to request him to wait till after her graduation from college; instead of informing him point blank that she never would marry him, he would be reasonable and not press his suit further at present.

"But," said Jake, "how are you going to finish your education, Ella? Your Aunt Jane is much worse, and no one to do the house work but the little girls, besides your aunt may not live long, and she wants to see you. And you know William Stuart has failed financially; lost everything; and can't send you to college any longer. I

know you like that Arthur Stuart, Ella, he is a fine fellow, but his own money, that was left to him by his deceased parents, is all gone, and Will Stuart has been paying his nephew's way through college for the last six months. So you see, Arthur will be obliged to quit college and go to work; and it will be a long time before he graduates; and he will never ask you to wait so long for him. It is all too bad, Ella, but the only thing left for you is to marry me, then we will take a trip around the world; think of it Ella, you will see all of the royal families of Europe, visit the Trossachs of Scotland, the Rhein, the Swiss scenery, the Paris boulevards, the Coliseum and St. Peter's at Rome, the Pyramids of Egypt, and Palestine, and the flower gardens of Japan, yes and the fjords of Norway."

Jake had spent many evenings in his bachelor quarters in the North-West studying about these places of interest for this particular occasion. Ella was dumbfounded by such bad news pertaining to her aunt and Mr. Stuart. That she must relinquish her cherished plan of going to college made her sick at heart. "Yes," she thought, "and it is probably true that if Arthur is compelled to leave his college work for an indefinite period, he would consider it asking too much to request me to wait for him. Oh! if I could only be free to tell him that I would wait for years, yea, a life time, for him."

She was so overwhelmed by the unexpected that she could form no immediate plan of action, but simply walked on, hardly conscious of the fact that Jake was by her side, talking, pleading, threatening, insisting. She heard scarcely a word he spoke now.

Jake took Ella's silence for consent, and in high spirits he escorted her to a magistrate's office.

Arthur began to realize that Jake was taking unfair

means with Ella, though it never occurred to him that he would go to the extent of forcing her to marry him. Nevertheless Arthur was very uneasy about Ella, as he almost ran through the crowd, dragging Elizabeth along.

"Oh! don't hurry so," protested Elizabeth.

"We must find Ella, that Landis fellow is up to some mischief," then he nearly ran into Sam Howell.

"Hello there Art, what's up, are you crazy, trying to catch a train or what?" asked Sam trying to dodge around Arthur, at the same time lifting his hat to Elizabeth. "Here Sam, please take Miss Bradley to her home, I've got urgent business on hand and must hurry," and off he went down the street on a run, leaving Elizabeth to explain the situation as best she could to the astonished Sam Howell.

Jake and Ella arrived at the magistrate's office, and as he opened the door, she attempted to escape. He used both arms to force her through the doorway, when Arthur came running up, and placing a hand firmly on Jake's shoulder, demanded an explanation.

"It's none of your darn business," angrily replied Jake thrusting Arthur's hand from his shoulder.

"I'll make it my business," snapped Arthur.

Just then a policeman, with whom Arthur had a friendly acquaintance, happened along.

"Here Jim Flanigan," called Arthur to the big burly policeman, and turning to Jake, he said, "If you will let this girl alone and quietly go your way, I'll let you off, if not Jim Flanigan knows where there is a 'cooler' that will keep you within bounds."

"See here," said Jake taking on a threatening attitude, "Miss Benson has consented to go with me here, and I'll just give you ten seconds to clear out of here."

"I never consented to do any such thing, and I do not



Arthur came running up, and placing a hand firmly on Jake's shoulder, demanded an explanation.

wish to see you again Mr. Landis," said Ella, realizing the gravity of the situation, at the same time fearing that some harm would come to Arthur.

Jake glancing at the big policeman, who appeared to be on the point of taking a hand in things, sullenly walked away. Arthur then took Ella home to Bradley's.

"I don't know how to thank you enough for what you have saved me from tonight," said Ella after a long silence.

"I am very, *very* glad that I found you in time, if I had not, I believe I would have gone crazy," said Arthur, as they entered the parlor at the Bradley apartment. And Ella noticed that he spoke more passionately than she had ever known him to do before.

It is difficult to foretell just what words would have passed between the two, so unnerved and excited were they, had not Elizabeth Bradley appeared on the scene.

When Arthur learned from Ella of his Uncle William's financial failure, he became down-hearted indeed. But contrary to Jake's prediction and Ella's fears, he decided to ask Ella to wait for him. "If she loves me, she will be willing to wait, and it would be better for her to wait than to be pestered by that Landis. If she did marry him, she would suffer far more from her uncongenial life with him than she would if she decided to wait a few years until I worked my way through college." He also thought of Sam Howell. "Sam's parents are wealthy," said Arthur half aloud to himself, "and he loves Ella, and if she could learn to love him, and they were to be married soon, she would be relieved from the domineering attentions of Landis, nor would it be necessary for her to wear her life out toiling at the Benson homestead while waiting for me to finish my schooling. Still I don't see how I can give her up, even to so good a man as Sam Howell. I'd rather

marry her now, I am sure I could make life more endurable for her than it would be at her uncle's homestead."

Ella had thought of Sam Howell too. In her worry over these unlooked for difficulties, one could hardly blame her for accepting almost any avenue of escape.

"If," she declared to herself, "Arthur will not ask me to wait for him, it would be better to marry Sam than to return to Canada and be worried to death by Jake Landis, and I feel certain that Sam would renew his suit, if I gave him the least encouragement. I doubt if I could learn to love him as I believe a wife should love her husband, but I could tolerate him, and I am sure he would make any girl a good husband."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WEDDING.

Mrs. Bradley's imported German canary was singing one of its most spirited songs, hopping about from perch to perch in its pretty cage in the parlor. Once it stopped singing long enough to pick a few seeds from the little glass cup attached to the side of the cage, or to peck at the cuttle-fish bone that was stuck between two-wires of the cage; then from its little throat warbled its most approved German airs. Presently, to Ella Benson, the bird's song seemed to gradually merge into Mendelssohn's wedding march, played by a young lady musician whom she could not recognize as having ever met before. As the last notes of the piano floated airily away, the minister commenced the marriage ceremony. Sam Howell stood by her side, his full face lit up with happiness and the merry twinkle in his blue eyes looked merrier, at the thought of at last marrying the girl of his choice. Many people were in the room. Ella could not recognize many of the faces. But there was Elizabeth, looking the picture of happiness as she realized that Ella was about to be wedded to Sam Howell, thus leaving Arthur Stuart for herself. "I may manage Arthur all right now, that Ella is out of the race," were, apparently, among the thoughts that caused her eyes to sparkle and her pretty lips to part in a smile. Mrs. Bradley was there too, looking as sedate and queenly as ever, while Prof. Bradley looked pleased as he caught the enthusiasm that emanated from the features of Sam. Ella could scarcely analyze her own feelings. She was conscious of Sam's supreme happiness, which, in a measure, caused her to feel a temporary contentment, but she could not say that she was really happy. It seemed to be the

best thing to do. Sam was wealthy, he was accomplished, every inch a gentleman, possessed a kind disposition, and his genial spirit was contagious to all with whom he came in contact. There was no doubt about his making one of the best of husbands. Why shouldn't her home be a happy one? Still she seemed to take the whole affair indifferently, as though it was simply a course marked out which she must follow. Where was the supreme joy and happiness a bride should feel when about to join hands with her life companion? She was glad Arthur was not there. She thought of the pain it would cause him to see her being wedded to another; and she also realized that her own feelings would soon be in a turmoil at the sight of the man she could not help owning that she loved.

How had this all come about? She could not remember having consented to this marriage. There seemed to have been a void space in her life. Had her mind failed her and yet others had not noticed it? Surely some things had happened that she could not account for. Yes, no doubt the worry over her troubles had got the better of her. She must have promised to marry Sam or she certainly would not be standing by his side now listening indifferently to the ceremony.

"Oh! well!" she almost sighed, "it can't be helped now, a promise is a promise, and it will be better than going back home to endure the hardships of the past all over again." She reasoned that she never could stand any more of the old days; she had seen too much of the world now; had tasted too much of the life she had always hoped for. The contrast between the two was too great. Yes it's all for the best. Still if Arthur only knew that she was willing to wait years and years for him, she surely would not have been standing by Sam Howell's side now. But

Arthur, no doubt, was too proud to ask her to wait so long. No, no, it was not that, she could not think of Arthur as proud in that way. Probably he felt that during the long wait her health would become impaired by hardships. She was sure that he had unselfishly arrived at the conclusion that it would be best for her to marry Sam Howell.

Now came the all important question from the minister, and she answered almost listlessly in a half whisper, "I will." Thus she became the wife of Sam Howell: Mrs. Ella Howell, oh, it sounds well enough, but—she almost screamed, and clutched a hanging tapestry for support, as she saw Arthur Stuart sitting dejectedly in a chair across the room. His saddened dark eyes were gazing abstractedly at the center of an Oriental rug on the floor.

Oh! if he will remain in that position; if he should look at her with those dear sad eyes; she knew she would lose control of her feelings. Would he look reproachfully at her? No, not he, he loved her too much to cause her more pain than he could help. But why had he come? She was sure he was not there at the commencement of the ceremony. Had he been unaware that she was to be married? Had he, oh, God!—could it be that he had come to tell her of his love, and come too late? At the thought she gave an involuntary gasp. Arthur evidently heard it, for he looked up quickly, and she met those poor sad eyes; he did not look reproachfully at her, no—no—but she was aware that the sight of her had increased the struggle going on in his breast. She saw him giving way to his grief, she saw his eyes become misty, and she heard him say "Oh" as though struck by a sharp pain. This was too much for her. "Arthur!" she cried, as she attempted to cross the room toward him, but she almost fainted and was obliged to sit down.

Arthur arose slowly as though with an effort and started toward her. "He is coming, the only man in the world I love; oh, Arthur! come! come!" She held out her hands. Arthur was still coming, it seemed ages, his coming. "Oh hurry! hurry!" "Yes, Ella dear," and he was kneeling beside her, her hands in his.

"I am so sorry dear," he said, "I came to tell you of my love for you, to ask you to wait for me, but I'm too late, you are Mrs. Howell," then he almost sobbed as he rose to his feet and turned away, gone—gone—she knew not where. She swooned. But presently she became conscious of the rapid clatter of horses hoofs on the pavement outside, and the rattling of vehicles, and some one cried, "Fire! there's a fire!" She opened her eyes. Elizabeth was standing by the window watching a fire engine passing down the street. But where were the others? Where was her husband, Sam Howell? Where was Arthur? But he had left before she fainted, but the others, why had they all gone but Elizabeth?

"Where are the others, Elizabeth?" she said faintly.

"What others, Ella?" was the surprising answer.

"Why—why, the wedding party?" she managed to gasp.

"What wedding party, Ella? There's been no wedding party that I know of. You were asleep in the rocker when I came in, and when the fire engine passed by I awakened you by crying, 'fire! there's a fire!'"

Ella leaned back in bewilderment and tried to think. Gradually it dawned on her mind that it was all a dream. At the realization of this she sprang from the chair and almost clapped her hands for joy.

"But what a dream," she mused, "it was so real, I never had a dream so full of details before. And Arthur. oh!

I'll wait, wait, wait forever, before I'll marry anyone but Arthur now," and she was happy in the thought.

Prof. Bradley came into the room and sat down, crossed one leg over the other, looked at the rug on the floor,—the self same rug that Arthur had gazed at in Ella's dream,—for a few minutes, then at Ella, and then spoke, "I am better acquainted with Bill Stuart's finances than either you or Arthur, and I have some misgivings as to his financial failure as reported by that young candidate for parliament, I believe there is a 'nigger in the fence,' " whereupon he arose from his chair. "I'm going to telegraph to Bill," he said, and went out. In due time a telegram came back that "Finances are in good shape, all is well, must be some mistake, you were misinformed." He telegraphed in regard to Mrs. Benson's health, and received the reply that her health was improving; had not been so well for years.

Thus fell one of Jake Landis' big schemes, planned by himself while driving oxen in the field, rehearsed by himself before John Pence in the evenings with the latter's approval, but with a doubt as to its feasibility lingering in his pessimistic mind.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DROPPED LETTER.

William Stuart, as he drove from the little country store and postoffice, drew from his coat pocket a letter, tore open the envelope and read:—

“New York, July 5th, 19—.

Dear Uncle and Aunt:—

I am somewhat excited and nervous from a very unusual incident which occurred yesterday,—

Thought Mr. Stuart, “It must have been very unusual to arouse that young man from his normal condition of equanimity,”—Miss Benson, Miss Bradley, and I joined a sailing party on the Sound yesterday. We had, at least I did, and I have reason to believe Ella did, a very enjoyable time, except that your candidate for parliament, Jake Landis, was a member of the party. I succeeded in keeping him away from Ella until on our way from the Long Island R. R. depot to Manhattan, when Landis succeeded in separating Ella and himself from Elizabeth and me, of course he was aided partly by the jostling crowd. Before I could get to them Landis had fairly pulled her along the street out of our sight. Of course I was exasperated, I managed to find them again, just as Landis was forcing her into a magistrate’s office. I soon put a stop to that and took Ella home to Prof. Bradley’s.

The upshot of it all is that Landis was endeavoring to force Ella to marry him. My nerves are too unstrung to permit me writing more, but will add that Landis will never get another chance to spirit her away, I for one will see to that.

With love,

Your nephew,
Arthur Stuart.”

"It's too bad that Jake Landis went all of the way to New York to bother that poor girl," mused Mr. Stuart as he placed the letter in its envelope and, as he thought, stuck the envelope in his inside coat pocket.

At one point along the road, Stuart got out of the buggy with his rifle to shoot a coyote, and as he did so, the letter, which had caught in a loose lining of the coat, fell to the ground. He missed the coyote and sprang into the buggy and was on his way home again.

Not long after, Henrich Klein came sauntering along and spying the letter lying on the ground stooped and picked it up.

"Fawt ees dees?" he said trying to read the address on the envelope.

"Meester Villem Stuard."

"I vonder fawt der ees eenside, I tink der ees not harm to reat de letter eef I spraken not," said Heinrich drawing the letter out of the envelope. Then he began to read.

"New York, Yuly, Foofth, 19—.

Tear Uncle und Aunt:—

I am steel somevat ekcited und nervous from a ferry oonusual eencideent which occurred yestertag."

"So—, so—, he pe ekcited, I vonder who dees ees," said Heinrich as he looked at the signature of the letter.

"Mit lof,

Your nephew,

Artur Stuard."

"Yah—yah, he pe ekcited ofer a geerl I vill pet," then Heinrich resumed reading the letter.

"Mees Benson, Mees Bradley, und I yoined ah sailing pardy on de Sount yesterday."

"Fawt pe a Sount I vould like to know," said the German scanning the word again; then he continued: "Ve hatt, at leest I deed, und I hafe reason to pelief Ella deed, a ferry enyoyable time."

"Yah, yah, I pet dey deed, dat plack eyed Arthur ees gone mashed on dat Mees Benson, I pet."

Again he resumed his reading: "except dat your cantitade for barliament, Yake Landees vas a member of de pardy,"—"yah," said Heinrich in surprise—"I know not dat Yake Landees vent to New York."

"I soocceeded een keeping heem away from Ella oonteel on our vay home from de Long Islant R. R. tepot to Manhattan, ven Landees soocceeded een separading Ella und heemself from Eleezabeth und me, of course he vas pardly asseested py de yostling crowd. Pefore I could get to tem, Landees hat fairly pooled her along de street und out of our sight.

"Of course I vas exasperated. I managed to find tem again, shust as Landees vas forcing her eento a magis-trade's offeece. I soon poot a stop to dot und took Ella home to Proffessor Bradley's. De oopshot"—"Py colly deet he get shot?"—"De oopshot of eet all vas dat Landees vas eendeavoring to force Ella to marry heem."

"Py colly he shust ought to be hangt."

"My nerves are too oonstrung to bermeet me vriting more, pud vill adt dat Landees vill nefer get anoder shance to speereet her away, I for von vill see to dat."

"Mine gott das ees a deriple ting for dat Yakob Landees to do. Py colly dat young Artur ees a goot von to see to eet dat Landees ton't podder he again. *Und py colly I vill see to eet dat Landees ton't get elected to de barliament.*"

Heinrich Klein took the letter to William Stuart's, then proceeded to make good his word.

In one part of the M. P. P. constituency lived a large German settlement. Landis had managed to get these Germans, almost to a man, in line as his supporters. Klein went to this German settlement, where he was well known and respected, and informed them of how Landis tried to force Miss Benson to marry him in New York. Ella Benson had taught school in this German neighborhood, and the honest German farmers had taken a great liking to the little blonde school-teacher. So these Germans were greatly indignant at Landis' recent actions in New York. The result was that the Germans, at the election, voted for the other candidate for member of parliament, a young Canadian, and Landis was defeated by about a dozen votes.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP CUP.

Arthur Stuart played golf, in fact he was a member of a golf club. He had never counted himself among the best players at the club. He had never been qualified as a candidate for the club championship cup. Yet he played well. He liked short approaches and putting best, because they were governed more by the mental powers than the physical. He practiced much of these two features of the game. After he learned to play these parts with a nicety, he began practicing the long drive. His physical strength proved good enough for the drive and his much practice at accurate playing in short approaches and putting, helped him to be fairly certain in his calculations in making a long tee-shot.

But when the time for qualifying came and Arthur met so many old and tried players, he lacked conceit enough to think that he had equal chances with such players, and lacking this conceit, he lost self-confidence and played worse than in his practice games.

The club was to hold its annual tournament for the club cup. Arthur Stuart was to make another trial for qualification along with other young players. Prof., Mrs. and Miss Bradley, and Miss Benson were invited to be at the club social, also to witness the championship game. The three first named had been invited every year since Arthur became a member of the club. But this was Ella Benson's first appearance at the golf links. The fact that Ella was to witness the final match put new determination into Arthur's mind. The mere idea that she was to be

present acted as a stimulus to Arthur's nerves, and to the surprise of most of the club members, he qualified in the trial game. But he had done some fine playing at his practice during the past year.

Now the championship game was about to be played. Ella Benson was standing a little apart from the crowd, looking over and admiring the pretty greens, when Arthur came walking briskly toward her. He was on his way to begin his part in the game. As he approached her an idea entered his head, which if he had had time to take second thought, would have lost courage, or considered the idea as too rash, and dispelled it from his mind. But before he could think twice, he was at her side and he hurriedly, and a little confusedly said to her, "Miss Benson, I am going in for the club championship cup, if I win, will you be mine?" As soon as he had uttered these rather hasty words, he felt almost faint, for fear he had made an irretrievable mistake—an awful blunder.

Ella was startled, surprised, but she retained her presence of mind, and a certain adventuresome spirit taking hold of her, before she could consider the full import of both Arthur's and her own words, she answered, "I will." As soon as he received her answer, he took one of her hands in his two and said, "Thank you Ella, I'll do my best to win, for winning the cup I would win you," then he was gone. Ella scarcely knew what to think. "Had she been too hasty? Yes, she loved Arthur Stuart, she was sure of that, but should not she have given him a more indefinite answer? Would he think her too easy? But it was too late now for Arthur had already made his first tee-shot; a long true drive, the ball never even entered the hazard, but landed on the green, it was followed by a good approach and went down in three.

"Good play," everybody cried. Ella wondered if Arthur really would win the cup, in her heart she hoped so, but she dared not even frame the wish into mental words. "Still," thought she, "Arthur, they say, never even qualified before, so there is not much likelihood of his winning the cup." Ella didn't know much about golf, in fact this was the first game of golf she had ever witnessed. But all through the game she heard such remarks as, "Maxwell is in the hazard, if he can get out nicely, he'll win, for Stuart can never get out of that hazard as neatly and with so little penalty as Tom Maxwell has been known to do. There he's out. Did you ever see any one get out as nicely as that?" "See, see," cried several of the crowd, "Stuart never even landed in the hazard, no penalty to pay, he made it in three again, my how he can drive, and so true too."

Arthur Stuart played as though he were playing for his life. He was strong, swift, yet accurate; he seemed to be possessed with some superhuman power, he was never known to play with such force and energy and yet so steady and true, not in the least excited, as calm and collected as when reclining leisurely in Prof. Bradley's big mahogany rocker reading "Plato's Republic." But his black eyes flashed at every stroke of his golf club. Only Ella, among those of the lookers-on, realized from whence Arthur got his incentive to play so well. She was surprised that she possessed such strong influence over him, but she was highly pleased too. She knew there was no doubt as to his love for her now.

Maxwell and Stuart had out done all of the other players, they were even now. The club championship lay between these two young men. All was suspense and expectancy to see who would come out the winner. It was

generally expected, however, that Maxwell would win, he had won the year before, when Stuart had not even qualified.

Ella watched, but she was unable to tell how the game was going, but by the exclamations around her. Suddenly there was abated breath, then a wild cheering and waving of handkerchiefs and caps. Stuart had won the cup by one score.

Ella's first inclination was to run and hide, then she thought, "No he won the cup and won me and it's all right."

Arthur handed his golf club to a caddy and went fairly bounding toward the crowd. He began a hurried search for the girl he had won; the cup could wait, the eager friends and acquaintances who pressed around him to shake hands could wait, but Ella, where was Ella, he must find her first.

Ella saw him hunting, and at first thought to wait till he found her, but on second thought, she said to herself, "Why wait for him, I'm his, and he is mine," at which she walked straight to him. He had not seen her yet, he was peering through the crowd in another direction.

"Arthur, you won," she said quietly. The words fairly electrified the young man, who quickly looked down at her, took her hands in his, and said, "I won the cup and the girl."

CHAPTER XVI.

CANADIAN CITIZENS.

Of course Arthur Stuart saw to it that Ella Benson wore, on her engagement finger, one of the little rings she had admired so much at Tiffany's. The happy couple decided that as soon as she had graduated from college and he had spent a year studying in Germany, they would be married. Accordingly, when the long wished for day arrived, they were married in the Bradley parlor. It was a double wedding, for Elizabeth Bradley also became Mrs. Tom Maxwell, having worn on her engagement finger the ring with a big flashing diamond.

Mr. and Mrs. Sam Howell were at the wedding, too, for Sam had found a young lady to take the place in his heart once reserved for Ella Benson. The lady of his choice being no other than Miss Bertha Stone, younger sister of Miss Mary Stone.

The next question was where to make their home. Arthur expected to get a good position at an academy or a preparatory school and work himself up to a college professorship; and Ella, whose talents lay along the same lines as her husband's, said she would help him in his work, especially assisting with the examination papers, etc., and thus their lives would be reciprocal each to the other, and therefore happy.

Ella liked New York, she liked the East; she enjoyed the delightful trips up the Hudson by boat; the great perpendicular Palisades of many colors along the Jersey shore, the green hills and picturesque looking villas and towns, the castle-like buildings of millionaires along the New York shore; and farther north the Highlands of the Hudson on both sides of the river. She took delight in the

Long Island Sound boat excursions. She loved to ride, on a steamer, over the stormy waves around Sandy Hook, and down the coast to Long Branch, returning by night, when the great electric lights at the lighthouses could be seen flashing at regular intervals during the voyage along the coast. She enjoyed the bicycle rides over the cycle paths from Brooklyn to the many little towns and inns over western Long Island, sometimes riding as far as Oyster Bay, the home of Theodore Roosevelt. She was fond of the walks with Arthur, passed the dairy and fruit farms of Westchester County, New York, and the visit to Sleepy Hollow of Ichabod Crane fame. She could not help feeling glad that she was American born when standing with her husband at West Point, watching the cadets on parade, and hear the sunset gun, see the cadets salute the stars and stripes as the band played "Hail Columbia."

But Ella had not forgotten the North-West, the new empire being formed, and the part she had taken in that formation. Naturally she longed once more for the old associations and surroundings, only she was in a position now to make those surroundings quite tolerable, since there was no more danger of being molested by Jake Landis, and she was married to, as she said, "The dearest and best man in the world." She felt that she ought to return to the North-West and help again in the development of the country. She wanted to tell Arthur of her wish to return to the province, but she feared that he, being so patriotic an American, and having planned to live in the States, would not think well of such a proposition, yet she knew he would even sacrifice his own feelings for her happiness. She felt that it was not right to ask him to sacrifice.

One day as Arthur sat in the mahogany rocker at Bradley's reading his dear "Plato's Republic," which book was also of interest to Ella, he said, "Listen, Ella, to what Plato

says in regard to woman's rights," and he read: "None of the occupations which comprehend the ordering of a state, belong to woman as woman, nor yet to man as man; but natural gifts are to be found here and there, in both sexes alike; and, so far as her nature is concerned, the woman is admissible to all pursuits as well as the man."—"What are you thinking about, Ella?" said Arthur, laying his book aside, "I don't believe you heard a word I read, and you are usually so interested in hearing striking passages from Plato: you look worried; what is troubling you, dear?" Ella arose from the sofa and, throwing her arms about his neck, said, "I must tell you, Arthur, I can't keep it any longer," and she told him all about her longing to return to Western Canada.

Arthur replied that he was a true born American and loved his country and the stars and stripes, still, since the only relatives living, besides his wife, were his Uncle William and Aunt Florence in the great North-West, and as they had no children, and had been to him, as well as to her, a father and mother, he guessed he wouldn't mind going to that newly settled country to live, especially since she wanted to go.

"Yes, I'll go and be a Canadian citizen, and we will work together in helping develop the new nation," said Arthur as he settled himself back in the rocker to read a little more in his "Plato's Republic," while his wife leaned over his shoulder, with her arms about his neck, to read in unison.

Arthur Stuart had always rather liked the North-West, since his visit there; he liked the prospect of new fields to conquer, the developing process of a new and untried country; it held out inducements for work and thought, the exercise of brain and brawn in the practice of new and up-to-date methods.

In due time Arthur Stuart received a position as a professor in a college in one of the North-West provinces; and he and Ella entered their new home in a thriving and enterprising western city in high hopes and great anticipations.

Arthur became one of the leading citizens of that part of the province and proved himself a true Canadian citizen. Ella found much to do, and proved herself a remarkable woman, helping Arthur in much of his reform work, and becoming a leading reformer herself, being one of the most prominent officials of one of the reform societies.

Thus Ella Benson, now Mrs. Ella Stuart, once a poor, over-worked pioneer girl, being continually worried by a man she detested, denied opportunities in life for which her natural refinement of character craved; yet, through it all remaining true to her Heavenly Father and doing whatever, she believed as a Christian, she could do, and trusting, hoping, believing that somehow future events would look more promising; at last came to her own—the long wished for opportunities of developing those talents with which God had endowed her, and which were given her for a purpose in the world.

Emerson made no mistake when he said, "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again."

It may be of interest to the reader to know that Jake Landis, after his political downfall, and his failure to marry the girl he said he was going to marry, recanted some of his former assertions, and actually married Cora Baker, and became a better man than he had been in the past, even to refraining from giving his oxen so many whip lashings, to the agreeable surprise of the oxen; and he really did drop, from the list of his vocabulary, some twenty or more of his choicest swear words.

CONCLUSION.

In connection with the Preface, I wish to state that in this story I have not attempted to discourage young persons from adopting views of life other than those acquired by home training, but that if new views of life must be adopted, choose those whereby you will be benefited. In other words, do as the old Quaker said, "Mind the Light," or be sure that the path you choose is one of character building.

It is also my aim to instill into the mind of the young the idea that right is might in the end. Also may the lesson be learned that if one is endowed with certain talents, you may be sure those talents were not intended to be allowed to lie dormant, but to be used for your own good, the good of the world, and to the glory and honor of the Creator.

